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PENITENTIAL DISCIPLINE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

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SOME ACCOUNT OF THE

PENITENTIAL DISCIPLINE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

IN THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES

BY

R. S. T. HASLEHURST, B.D.

172 - V.

"Brethren, in the Primitive Church there was a godly discipline . . . until the said discipline may be restored again (which is much to be wished)."—COMMINATION SERVICE, 1549.

"The age (it will be said) is loose, and will not bear it; though that be indeed a reason which most requires it."—MARSHALL, 1714.

"Many of those now 'alienated' would, in days of stricter discipline and sterner faithfulness, have been excommunicated, forbidden, that is, instead of entreated to enter our churches."—ARCHBISHOP MAGEE, 1872.

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PREFACE

IN the following pages I have endeavoured to sketch briefly the institution and development of the penitentiary discipline of the Christian Church. The subject, so far as I have been able to discover, has not received treatment since Marshall wrote his work, "The Penitential Discipline of the Primitive Church" (1714), except in encyclopædias. All the material was brought together and arranged in the sixteenth century by Morinus, whose work must always be the standard book of reference on the subject. But the arrangement is not chronological, and he deals with it under certain headings rather than as a historical growth. My object has been to trace it from the earliest times till the year 400, allowing the Fathers to tell their own story, so far as is possible. I have been obliged to deal more cursorily than they deserve with Tertullian and Cyprian, for fear of prolonging the work unduly. I have taken for granted the knowledge of the chief events in the period, which any Church History will give: if I have a preference it is for the work of Dr. Foakes-Jackson, though all the works that I have discovered are eminently readable, and each has some merit of its own. If I have made unduly prolix extracts from patristic sources it is because they are to me of such intense interest that I cannot bring myself to condense them. I have had in my mind not so much the professed theological student, who has Migne at his elbow, as the more amateur student, acquainted with the brief outline of the courts of early Church history, and glad to have one aspect of it brought before him so far as possible in the words of those who made the history. I have been glad to avail myself of Lightfoot's "Apostolic Fathers," and of the translations of patristic works edited by Pusey, Robertson and Donaldson, Wace and Schaff, though I have not always followed them verbatim.

Various causes have led me to write this book. I took part three or four years ago in a friendly argument with a priest of the Roman communion, and to all his objections to Anglicanism I was able to reply to my own, if not to his, satisfaction. But I confess that I had no answer when he said, "You have no discipline." I could only quote the well-known phrase at the beginning of the Commination Service. That led me to Marshall, and thence to Morinus, and I determined to put before my fellow-churchmen some account of those practices of the apostles and thei rim-mediate successors which we should surely try to follow. About the same time I read Fr. Figgis' "Churches in the Modern State," and Archdeacon Hobhouse's Bampton Lectures on "The Church and the World in Idea and History"; I owe much to their stimulus. It is the fashion to speak of everything being "at the cross-roads," and the ideal of establishment has certainly received some hard knocks lately. Erastianism may be said to be in its coffin, and erstwhile vigorous defenders of the Establishment of the English Church have had their ardour very much cooled. Many who did their utmost for the Church of Wales in the hour of her danger have come to feel that she will be perhaps the gainer as much as, if not even more than, the loser by being disestablished. Churchmen have clung to certain positions which were being attacked, although it is more than likely that had no attack been made they would have relinquished them long ago. The Enabling Act is a step in the same direction. We seem to be coming rapidly to the ideal of a free Church in a free State, so far as that can be realized. Other influences are at work. As late as 1882 Archbishop Magee wrote: "Whenever the State treats, and requires the Church to treat, as married, those whom the Church declares to be not married or marriageable, *then* will come a strain that will snap, or go near snapping, the links that bind Church and State." This is coming to pass. The Church then will have to make rules for her own life, and it certainly seems as if she might exercise her own discipline. Nobody would dream of setting up again the four stations of penance that were in vogue in the Eastern Church in the fourth century. That elaboration is not, so far as I have been able to gather from missionaries, needful at the present day in the mission-

field. But it remains true that, as Principal Rainy said, "The Church of England is the worst-organized Church in Christendom," and that reproach might well be done away. It is time that we realized that quality is better than quantity, and were not so keen on counting Easter communicants as the average Sunday communicants.

Another feature of the times is self-reproach. During the war we heard much of "the failure of the Church." That is, in itself, an encouraging sign. A church that can be said to be a "success," either by its members or by those who do not belong to it, is, indeed, in a parlous plight. But the phrase needs defining. There are various standards of failure and success. A play, a film, a concert, a book, need not be a failure because it is not lucrative: how much truer is this of a church? The Church of England has failed because it has not been a failure: it has failed in the eyes of its Head because it has not failed enough in the eyes of the world. These are broad generalizations: but I think it will be admitted that there is some truth in them. And if Early Church history teaches us anything it is this, that its discipline, admittedly far stricter than our own, met with objections not from people who blamed it for being overstrict, but from people who blamed it, and even deserted it, for not being strict enough. It is the veriest commonplace to say that every schism, however marred by party spirit and exaggeration, stands or has stood for some neglected truth. It is in that light that I would draw attention to the phenomena of Montanism, Novatianism, and Donatism.

It is not without some trepidation that I have published this work. I shall be quite satisfied if someone with more leisure and a better theological equipment will deal with the question as it deserves. The work will appear to many readers very disjointed and scrappy, but it has been written in the intervals of a busy life, and will bear many signs of incompleteness and inadequacy. I shall be content if I can give only to a handful of readers some part of the pleasure in reading it that it has been to me to write it, and I trust that I have written nothing unworthily of the Church to which I belong or of her Head.

August, 1920.

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PENITENTIAL DISCIPLINE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

CHAPTER I

DISCIPLINE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

NO discussion of the Penitential Discipline of the Early Church can begin with the words of our Lord. He came not to destroy but to fulfil the law, and the most superficial reader of the gospels must see that He was building on a foundation already laid, destroying the "wood, hay, and stubble" that had been laid upon it, but preserving all that could be preserved. Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are not taught as they would have to be taught to degraded heathen, as something entirely new. They are *re*taught. "When ye fast . . ." "When ye pray . . ."—the practice is taken for granted.

The Jews had a discipline of their own. The apostles were perfectly familiar with its operation. It is hardly credible that St. Peter had not seen and known someone under religious discipline. He may even have been under it himself. The apostles when they administered discipline as leaders of the Christian Church were only carrying on a principle with which they had been familiar from childhood. There are three possible views to take of the relations between Judaism and Christianity, or—to put the same thing in other words—between the two Testaments. To some people Christianity is to Judaism what the pinnacles or battlements on the top of a tower are to the tower itself. To others Christianity is the tower, from the bottom of the foundation to the highest point, while by its side is an ivy-covered ruin which is Judaism. The true view surely is

that Judaism is the foundation, and that Christianity is the tower. From this point of view we may glance briefly at the system of discipline in vogue in the Jewish Church.

Church and State were, under the Mosaic system, one. Under a theocracy every crime must be a sin and every sin a crime. The various penalties imposed under the law were penalties at once civil and religious. Some offences were of course more ecclesiastical than others, at least from our modern point of view. Of these the chief were idolatry, sacrilege, and the ministration of a priest when in a state of impurity. Moreover, the punishments were not only corrective. The uncircumcised male, the person who ate unleavened bread during the "seven days," or consulted wizards and necromancers, was "cut off," or excommunicated (Gen. xvii. 14; Exod. xii. 15; Lev. xx. 6). Death was the penalty *for most forms of impurity*, for sabbath-breaking, even for cursing of parents. All these things are to be read in Leviticus and need not be detailed. The point is that they were punishments not only of and by the State, but of and by the Church. The Jew realized very early in life that he belonged to a Church with a strict and rigid discipline.

The developments of that discipline up to the Christian era took the following course. The ḥerem or ban (חֵרֶם) is first met with at the end of Leviticus (xxvii. 28 *sqq.*). It is the "devoted thing," a person, animal, or thing set apart for God. As such it could not be sold or redeemed. Then it became the devoted thing, not from any holiness with which it was invested, but from its essential unholiness. The spoil of a conquered nation or city was either ḥerem in the older sense, and was to come into the treasury of the Lord (Joshua vi. 19, 24), or more usually in the later sense, devoted for destruction. In this sense Jericho was ḥerem, including all the inhabitants except Rahab's family, and all the spoil (Joshua vi. 17, 18; cf. Deut. ii. 34, iii. 6, vii. 5). The persons or things were ḥerem because they tended to idolatry and therefore were to be destroyed. Achan himself became ḥerem by infection, so to say. By being contaminated with idolatrous things he himself became as they were, devoted to the Lord. So too Saul spared Agag and the sheep and the oxen which were ḥerem (1 Sam. xv.). For a similar use of the word see 1 Kings

xx. 42: "Because thou hast let go out of My hand the man whom I had devoted to destruction (אִישׁ חֶרְמִי), therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people." Similarly Edom is called "the people of My curse" (Is. xxxiv. 5) (עַם חֶרְמִי), that is, the people whom I, the Lord, have devoted to destruction.

In the Deutero-Zechariah (xiv. 11) one of the consequences of the universal worship of the Lord when "the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall the Lord be one and His name one" is that there shall be no more ḥerem, because there will be no idolatrous nations or persons to be devoted to destruction. On the other hand, the last verse of the Old Testament threatens a ḥerem for national apostasy.

By the time of Ezra, however, the discipline has become less severe. Ezra convenes an assembly of the Jews to deal with the question of their foreign wives (Ezra x.). Any not attending will find his substance "forfeited" (ḥerem), and himself separated from the congregation of the captivity. There is no question of death here, and "separated" is not "cut off" (בדל not כרת). This marks the connecting link between the earlier and the later discipline of the Jewish Church. Herem henceforth means not the thing or person banned, but the ban itself. We have passed to the era of the synagogue.

The Shamta or Shammata (Aram. שמתא) was probably the designation for all ecclesiastical discipline, and not a part of it. The three stages of discipline were called Herem, Niddui, and Nezifa. The ḥerem was the most severe. The dread of it is shown in the New Testament. Christians are warned that they will be haled into the synagogues, and questioned as to their loyalty to the Jewish faith (Luke xii. 11). They will be delivered up not only to prisons but to synagogues (Luke xxi. 12) and scourged there (Matt. x. 17, xxiii. 34; Mark xiii. 9). "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God" (John xvi. 2). Even during the days of our Lord's ministry it had been decided that excommunication was the penalty for Christianity (John ix. 22). The procedure was as follows. The culprit who had not succumbed under the lighter discipline of niddui was exhorted in the synagogue

to repentance. On Monday, Thursday, and the following Monday he was warned that ḥerem was hanging over him. The sentence was thus not hastily pronounced, but when it was pronounced the ruler of the synagogue said "N.N. is excommuincated," or, if he were absent, "Let N.N. be excommunicated." It is interesting to notice that the expression used in 1 Corinthians xvi. 22 ("If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be Anathema Maran-atha") has been conjectured by Graetz ("Geschichte der Juden") to be a corrupt reading of "Mûḥram 'atta," that is, "Thou art excommunicated." The exclusion was indefinite. The person was separated from the congregation, could be supplied only with the bare necessities of existence, was forbidden all social intercourse save with his wife and children, was excluded from public worship, and his family might suffer to the extent of exclusion from worship, and, in the case of the children, from school. He was, in fact, "a heathen and a publican," outside the pale and ostracized.

Niddui was far less severe. While ḥerem was the punishment for the graver offences persisted in, either against the religious authorities, morality, and public decency, or against religion generally, niddui was inflicted both for these at first and also for lighter and more trivial offences. If, for example, a man desecrated the second day of a festival, which was only a rabbinical institution, made unnecessary use of the name of God, or if being a slaughterer of cattle he neglected to show the knife to the rabbi that he might be satisfied that it was fit for its purpose both on ritual and humanitarian grounds, he was liable to niddui. The punishment under niddui lasted for a period of thirty days, which could be repeated once or twice if the offender proved contumacious, and consisted of a modified form of ostracism. The penitent had to appear in the garb of a mourner, clothed in black, and as a mourner was not allowed to bathe, cut his hair, or wear shoes. Although allowed to attend the worship of the synagogue, he could not form one of the quorum necessary for a public service. The court of the synagogue had power to lessen or aggravate the conditions of ostracism. At the end of the prescribed period the offender might make due submission when the ban was removed with the words, "Thou art absolved; thou art forgiven."

Nezifa was instituted in the second century A.D. chiefly as a penalty for insult to the religious authorities. It lasted only seven days. If a prominent person, a nasi or other learned man, were addressed thus, " How insolent the fellow is," the offender was subject to nezifa for seven or in some cases for one day only. He could not appear in public and had to retire to his house in remorse. He was not separated from the society as such, and need not apologize, his submission to nezifa being considered to include an apology.

The perils to which Judaism was, and is, subject necessarily vary. In the Old Testament times the issue was plain and clear-cut. It was God or Baal. There were only " two opinions " possible. A people that was monotheist in the midst of polytheistic nations had of necessity to possess a rigid discipline of its own. Many of the jibes against some sides of Old Testament morality would be silenced on reflection that to take a heathen prisoner or even a heathen religious emblem involved great danger of contamination. As soon as a man knows that " an idol is nothing " he can do what he likes with it. But when he is not quite certain that the gods of the heathen are nothing it is very needful to protect him from their presence and from all association from their devotees. Nor was a rigid discipline any the less necessary after the exile. There was always a tendency to assimilation with other nations. However misguided many of the Jews were in their outlook on life, and however much they merited the condemnation of our Lord, at least they kept burning the flame of monotheism. From their own point of view they were quite right to kill Him. " Intellexerunt Judaei quod non Ariani," and as long as He made Himself equal with God they were bound to go to the most extreme lengths with Him. After the destruction of the Temple the need of a severe discipline increased. The necessity for preserving Judaism intact involved a rigid and uncompromising censorship of the life, both of the community and the individual. The fundamental principle of holiness, the paramount importance of obedience to God, and due respect to the authorities were kept alive largely by the system of discipline. It was when the theocracy had come to an end and Church and State were no longer one but two, and two sworn foes, that a disciplinary

system was even more essential than in the early days of the occupation of Canaan. The discipline of the synagogue took the place of the discipline of the State. Something of an analogy may be discovered between the history of the Jews and the history of the Church of England. In medieval times there was more or less of a theocracy in this land. The Reformation did not make it any the less of a theocracy. Queen Elizabeth was very anxious to see you in church regularly. Until within comparatively recent times participation in the Holy Communion was necessary if a man would take on himself certain public offices. Then the tide turned, and the rise of Nonconformity caused toleration for various forms of Christianity. The idea of an establishment has taken less and less hold of men's minds. Vehemently opposed by a large section of Nonconformity it is now being opposed by the most loyal church-people. But with the withdrawing of the last shreds of State-administered discipline comes all the greater need for the true discipline, that administered by the Church. And if this is to be revived, as is very much to be desired, it can only be done by a faithful and penitent return to the ideals and practices of the earliest days of the Church.

CHAPTER II

THE WORDS OF CHRIST HIMSELF

MATT. XVI. 18, 19 [A]

κἀγὼ δέ σοι λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ πύλαι ᾅδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς. δώσω σοι τὰς κλεῖδας τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν δήσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν λύσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

And I also say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

MATT. XVIII. 15–18 [B]

Ἐὰν δὲ ἁμαρτήσῃ ὁ ἀδελφός σου, ὕπαγε ἔλεγξον αὐτὸν μεταξὺ σοῦ καὶ αὐτοῦ μόνου. ἐάν σου ἀκούσῃ, ἐκέρδησας τὸν ἀδελφόν σου· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀκούσῃ, παράλαβε μετὰ σοῦ ἔτι ἕνα ἢ δύο, ἵνα ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων ἢ τριῶν σταθῇ πᾶν ῥῆμα. ἐὰν δὲ παρακούσῃ αὐτῶν, εἰπὸν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ· ἐὰν δὲ καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας παρακούσῃ, ἔστω σοι ὥσπερ ὁ ἐθνικὸς καὶ ὁ τελώνης. Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅσα ἐὰν δήσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ὅσα ἐὰν λύσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ.

And if thy brother sin [against thee], go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear *thee* not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear then, tell it unto the church; and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

JOHN XX. 22, 23 [C]

Καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Λάβετε Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον· ἄν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται αὐτοῖς· ἄν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται.

And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

IT will be convenient to refer to these passages as A, B, C. The best and most scholarly treatment of these passages that I have discovered is that by Mr. J. K. Mozley, under the heading of "Binding and Loosing" in the "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics." He points out that we must interpret A and B in the light of "the normal usage of the time," and that we are to understand that Peter is informed in A that he is now a competent rabbi, that in the exercise of his authority he will bind and loose, that is, command and forbid, certain things. He will possess the keys of the kingdom of heaven, just as the scribe, on being admitted to office, receives "the key of knowledge" (Luke xi. 32). No doubt this was the idea conveyed to St. Peter's mind. He has made the great confession, passed (if one may say so) his final examination successfully, and is handed the insignia of his office.

With respect to B, Mr. Mozley says: "In Matthew xviii. 18 the sense of 'bind' and 'loose' has developed in view of the context, and its positive content has become greater: the power to exclude from the society in view of a stubbornly maintained refusal to rectify an offence is involved; verses 19–20 as well as verses 15–17 show that the new society is regarded as possessing powers of self-government from God, and that its decisions will be ratified by God." It is with extreme diffidence that one ventures to differ from Bishop Westcott, but it is hard to subscribe to the following: "The scope of the promise (in C) differs from that formerly given to the society (B), which concerns the enactment of ordinances and not the administration of that which is purely spiritual." C may differ from A in this respect, but surely not from B. The hardened sinner in B is not given any ordinance, new or old, he is

dealt with on purely spiritual lines. Mr. Mozley says that although A and B soon came to be identified with C, they cannot be legitimately connected. "The most that we can say is that in (B) the context seems to show that the power of binding and loosing implies, among other things, the power of treating sin as pardonable or the reverse, with reference to admission into, or exclusion from, the community." The whole article is most valuable to any student of the question.

The matter has not, so far as I am aware, been treated from the point of view of our Lord's methods with His disciples. It is a mere commonplace to observe that His training of them was gradual. He revealed Himself to them, and one might add, themselves to themselves, slowly. Bearing this fact in mind, light may be thrown on the three passages. It will be noticed that the promise is to the one man in A, to the twelve in B, and to "the whole company present" (Westcott) in C. Again, the promise in A is couched in purely Jewish form. ἐκκλησία has a new meaning, perhaps, but not a new sound. St. Peter becomes a rabbi, with power to command and forbid certain practices. An interval elapses, not without considerable advance in knowledge being imparted to the twelve (particularly in xvi. 21–28, xvii. 1–13), and then they are led forward again. The "brother" (in itself something of a new idea) sins against the brother. The act, even if committed privately, is of a public character: the ἐκκλησία is involved. He is to be remonstrated with privately, then before two or three, and finally he is to be haled before the whole body of the faithful. Then, as if to avoid leading His hearers (so to say) out of their depth, they are given familiar ideas. The sinner is to be as the heathen, or as the publican who has apostatized and cast in his lot with the heathen; and then follows the remark about binding and loosing once more. Certainly John xx. 23 (C) might have come in with greater appropriateness: but it is just the slight inappropriateness of Matthew xviii. 18, which is, if one might say so with reverence, such a stroke of genius. B seems to me a kind of bridge from A to C; or to use a more exact metaphor, a ladder from one to the other.

There are other points to be noticed in these passages. In all three the emphatic perfects are remarkable. "The

use of the perfect . . . expresses the absolute efficacy of the power. No interval separates the act from the issue. There is perfect harmony, perfect coincidence, between the divine voice through the society and the divine will" (Westcott). It is impossible in English to do justice to the Greek here, unless one were to render it "shall be already" bound, or loosed.

The promise in C is, as Westcott says, to the Society as a whole. "There is nothing in the context, as has been seen, to show that the gift was confined to any particular group (as the apostles) among the whole company present. The commission, therefore, must be regarded properly as the commission of the Christian society and not as that of the Christian ministry." That is perfectly true, and we shall see later on how this ideal was realized. Any society possesses, from the mere fact of its being a society, power to admit or to expel, but it will act normally through its own appointed officers.

Westcott says: "The gift, and the refusal of the gift, are regarded in relation to classes and not in relation to individuals. The use of the plural appears in some degree to indicate this (ἄν τινων, αὐτοῖς); and still more the necessity of giving to 'retain' an application corresponding with that of 'remit.' It is impossible to contemplate an absolute individual exercise of the power of 'retaining'; so far it is contrary to the scope of the passage to seek in it a direct authority for the absolute individual exercise of 'remitting.'" I confess I am at a loss to understand these words. To begin with, Codex Vaticanus (B) gives a variant reading τινος . . . τινος. But even if τινων be the right reading it is not easy to say that it can therefore refer to classes only. Our Lord might contemplate the Church expelling an offender here or there, or pardoning him, and still use the plural. Certainly in (passage) B it is the single brother who is expelled. Nor is it easy to see why "it is impossible to contemplate an absolute individual exercise of the power of 'retaining.'" It is not more serious to retain than to remit, and it is surely more serious to retain classes than to retain individuals. And the context makes it impossible to interpret the Bishop as meaning that *one* man cannot retain: he means that the society cannot retain one man's sins, unless I have wholly misunderstood him.

Attention should be drawn to the words which precede the great commission. "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." The words are true in numberless ways, of course, but in this particular connection I cannot but think that they refer to the fact that the "Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." God alone can forgive sin: but His power can be delegated, and if it was so delegated in the case of the Son, Who is God, it is delegated by Him to the Christian Society.

Nor are they separable from what follows: "And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." Westcott interprets the anarthrous phrase as equivalent to "a gift of the Holy Spirit." "The relation of the Paschal to the Pentecostal gift is therefore the relation of quickening to endowing (of Baptism to Confirmation). . . . The characteristic effect of the Pentecostal gift was shown in the exercise of supremacy potentially universal. The characteristic effect of the Paschal gift was shown in the new faith by which the disciples were gathered into a living society" (comp. Luke xxiv. 45). He adds very truly that "to regard the words and act as a promise only and a symbol of the future gift is wholly arbitrary and unnatural." And he concludes by remarking that "the exercise of the power must be placed in the closest connection with the faculty of spiritual discernment consequent upon the gift of the Holy Spirit." The Church must, in order to exercise the tremendous responsibility of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining, possess not only the command but the assistance needed. The one is given in the words, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you": the other is conveyed in the breathing and the gift of the Spirit.

It would be waste of time to recapitulate and refute the Papist conclusion deduced from A. The difficulty of wholly dissociating A from B which is involved, and the difficulty of showing that the command must be not to Peter alone, and not to the whole Church, but merely to Peter's successors in a certain See, are not easily overcome. But these interpretations are at least not so forced as those of certain Protestants, who, drifting far from the founders of Protestantism, practically explain the whole passages away into nothingness. The passages find their best commentary after

all in the practices of the apostles and their immediate successors. Those who interpret these passages in ways which do violence both to the original words and to the records of the Early Church will probably be found to have either a distorted idea of what the Body of Christ is, or no idea at all. It is not easy to find Papal Ultramontanism or Protestant Individualism in the pages of the New Testament.

CHAPTER III

THE APOSTOLIC AGE

FROM the very beginning the apostles exercised discipline over the Church. We are conscious from the first of an ordered community. The first disciplinary rule made was that Judas' successor should be one of those who had been faithful followers of the Master since John's baptism, had been a witness of the Resurrection, and continued among the faithful until the Ascension (Acts i. 21, 22). Although they left the ultimate choice to direct divine guidance, in every other respect they chose Judas' successor themselves. The regulated and orderly life of the little community is shown in Acts ii. 42. The case of Ananias and Sapphira is not strictly relevant, as the discipline was administered not by men but by God. St. Peter merely declares her fate to Sapphira and does not inflict it, nor would he have any right to do so. But the incident is significant of the strictness of the early discipline. The narrative of the appointment of the deacons shows the twelve settling a grievance which had been "told to the Church." In Acts viii. St. Peter administers discipline to Simon. He does not excommunicate him, but warns him, and the warning is taken. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter" is not materially different from a sentence of excommunication, but unlike excommunication it is not final. The punishment of Elymas the sorcerer (Acts xiii. 8–11) is somewhat analogous to that of Ananias and Sapphira. In this case, however, it is inflicted upon one of "those without," and this lay beyond the province of apostolic discipline.

The apostles, however, had not only to face the difficulty of deciding on who was worthy to remain in the Church. They had also to dictate who was worthy to enter it. This was the cause of the first great "crisis in the Church."

St. Peter's vision taught him that a person could become a Christian without the necessity of being or being made a Jew. Chapter xv. deals with this problem and its solution, but its significance for us lies in the fact that the Church undertook to settle the terms under which new members should be enrolled in the body.

The remainder of the Acts is irrelevant to our special enquiry, unless it be that we see discipline in the incident of xix. 1–8. Here again the question is not concerned with the punishment of sin, but with the terms of membership. The "certain disciples" were not convicted of any sin. They were simply, as we should say, unconfirmed. There might have been good reasons for admitting the validity of their baptism by John, but St. Paul will not confirm them until he has first instructed and then baptized them. We find further the first trace of delegated apostolic authority in Acts xx. 28. Here, it is true, the command is to feed the flock, but προσέχετε τῷ ποιμνίῳ (take heed unto the flock) implies more than mere feeding; it involves authority and command.

The Epistle to the Romans contains nothing very relevant to the question, which may be accounted for by the fact that the apostle had in all probability never visited Rome and was writing to the members of a church most of whom he did not know. Prevention is always better than cure, and St. Paul lays down principles with regard to meat (xiv. and xv. 1 and 2), which will obviate anything like a schism over a trifle; but in xvi. 17 he bids them "mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned." Whether these persons are the same as those who scrupled about meat is not clear. Watchfulness is enjoined, and there the matter is left.

When we turn to the Epistles to the Corinthians we come into a very different atmosphere. Divisions are in the air (i. 10 ff.). There are not yet "churches" in Corinth. The scandal, so rife in these times, of rival denominations, Paulites, Apollosites, Cephasites, Christites, each with a separate place of worship and a separate minister, has not yet developed. But there are cliques, which are schisms in embryo, and there is the spirit of division which does not wait long before it clothes itself in various bodies. All the

apostle's entreaties are in the direction of unity. But when we come to the fifth chapter sin is not merely meditated, but actually committed. The facts of the case of incest are clear. It is not disputed, nay, it is a cause of pride (ver. 2). The apostle proceeds to deal summarily with the offender, and acts in a manner which might be described as essentially democratic, and essentially autocratic also. The words are very significant. "I verily being absent in body, but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of the Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one to Satan. . . ."

To all intents and purposes the Corinthians and the founder of their church, with its divine Head, are sitting in solemn judgment on the offender. St. Paul is present as well as "our Lord Jesus," and the sentence is pronounced by the apostle in the name and with the power of the Lord Jesus, acting both as their spokesman and as His. He thus avoids two great dangers. By omitting any mention of Jesus Christ, if such an impossibility can be conceived, he would have degraded the Church to a mere club, a human society with power to deal with its members not essentially differing from any other local ἑταιρεία, summoned by its president. Or by leaving them out of consideration altogether, and pronouncing the sentence without any reference to them, but only in the name of the Lord Jesus, he would have been false to their own baptism. They would have felt that they had no power over a fellow-member who had caused a scandal, and apart from any other drawbacks would not have been the more prone to exercise any discipline in the future.

The offender is "delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (ver. 5). This can only be interpreted in the light of Job ii. 5 ff.: "But put forth Thy hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce Thee to Thy face." St. Paul believed that Satan was permitted to inflict certain bodily infirmities on himself (2 Cor. xii. 7) and others (1 Tim. i. 20). The same thought appears later in this epistle (xi. 29, 30). The nature of the disease inflicted on the Corinthian offender is not mentioned, nor

are we told whether it was fatal or not, unless he is identical with the offender mentioned in 2 Corinthians, in which case it plainly was not. The principle of the leaven and the lump is then expounded, possibly with reference to the coming Easter, and they are exhorted to purge out the old leaven (ver. 7). The chapter ends with the correction of a misunderstanding. In the previous epistle the apostle had written to them bidding them to have " no company with fornicators." This had evidently been misinterpreted, for he goes on to say, " not at all meaning the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters ; for then must ye needs go out of the world : but as it is I wrote unto you not to keep company if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; with such a one, no not to eat. For what have I to do with judging them that are without ? Do not ye judge them that are within, whereas them that are without God judgeth ? " The final injunction refers to this case in particular as well as to any such case that may occur. " Put away the wicked man from among yourselves."

The duty of settling the disputes of the members of the Church is urged in the next chapter. Evidently some Corinthians had not been obeying our Lord's command to " tell it unto the Church." The judicial authority of the Church is asserted with much force. " Know ye not that we shall judge angels ? How much more the things that pertain to this life ? " The regulations concerning marriage need not detain us. There is no question of any discipline being administered to an offender. The problems are such as are bound to be raised in a new church. " So ordain I in all the churches," is the apostle's claim, but it is not made in respect of terms of membership, but of the duties of Christians who are already members and whose membership is not imperilled by any grave sin. But there is a distinct instance of discipline, although no sentence is pronounced, in x. 21.

It is plain that certain Corinthians of strong conscience had drunk the cup of devils, that is, partaken at some heathen orgy. So long as no actual apostasy was involved, and they knew that an idol was nothing, there was no sin other than that of wounding a weaker conscience. But a

low standard was evidently held by many. They were made to see that some measure of contamination must ensue not only to the Body but to themselves as individuals. " Have not they which eat of the sacrifices communion with the altar ? " is the principle which St. Paul insists on. But that is quite a different matter from scandals at their own altar. What view they were holding of the Eucharist does not appear. The result of it was that they came to it as to a feast, not even contriving to see in it a feast of brotherhood, since " each one taketh before other his own supper ; and one is hungry and another is drunken " (xi. 21). Here it is no question of an excommunication : they are rather bidden to come, but only after careful self-examination. The remainder of the epistle deals with errors of thought and life, all of them instructive, not merely for the advice and instruction given, but also for the principles on which they are given. It is the story of many communities of Christians as yet immature and little instructed in the faith, and much of it could be found repeated in records of missionary work elsewhere.

The theory that 2 Corinthians represents two epistles solves the difficulty of the alteration of tone between chapters i.–ix., and the remainder, but its discussion is not relevant to the question of discipline. The most important passage is chapter ii. 5–11 : " But if any hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow, not to me, but in part (that I press not too heavily) to you all. Sufficient to such a one is the punishment which was inflicted by the many ; so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you to confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye are obedient in all things. But to whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also : for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes have I forgiven it in the person " (R.V. marg. " presence ") " of Christ ; that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan : for we are not ignorant of his devices." There seems every reason to identify the person forgiven with the incestuous man in 1 Corinthians v. It is the natural idea that would enter into the head of every reader, and the

task of showing that the two cases are distinct is not easy. We find echoes of 1 Corinthians v. here. In the former passage the apostle is blaming his converts for being "puffed up." So far as they had any corporate feeling in the matter, it was a feeling of self-satisfaction. Now the corporate feeling has changed. The incestuous man has made them sorrowful. His act remains the same; it is they who view it in a different light. Again, we saw how the "putting away" was compassed by the whole church at Corinth assembled in solemn conclave. The apostle is careful lest they should look on the sentence as having been inflicted by himself alone (1 Cor. v. 3, 4), and he reiterates the fact here. "The punishment was inflicted by the many." The same thought is brought out in the forgiveness. The Church has inflicted the sentence: the Church forgives. The apostle then forgives, but not as acting on his own authority. He forgives in the person or presence of Christ. Satisfied that the previous state of being "puffed up" has changed to one of "sorrow," and that the willingness to forgive on their part is no longer the easy condonation of a sin not felt to be a sin, but the result of some contrition in the offender himself, the apostle proceeds to act on the commission entrusted to him and remits the man's sin. The mention of Satan is common to both passages, but the sense is rather different. In 1 Corinthians v. the man is delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, but here there is no mention of anything bodily. The danger is lest "such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow."

The "ministry of reconciliation" and the "word of reconciliation" in chapter v., verses 18 and 19, cannot have any direct reference to the absolution of sins. That is not to say that St. Paul had not already in chapter ii. used both. The "I forgive" is the word of the ministry. But the sense here is different. The word and the ministry are those of preaching and exhortation. In the next verse the apostle bids his converts, none of whom, so far as we know, was excommunicated, or doing penance, to be reconciled to God. He might have used similar words to the incestuous man in order to bring him to a different frame of mind, and have assured him that he, as apostle, had both the word and ministry of reconciliation. But in this case

the apostle is plainly exhorting " saints " to whom he had preached the word of reconciliation and for whom he had exercised the ministry of reconciliation in Holy Baptism, and who were in virtue of that baptism " in Christ " and " a new creature " (ver. 17) to " be reconciled to God." The apostle is using a word of reconciliation not essentially differing from the Exhortation at Morning and Evening Prayer, and is prepared to use the ministry of reconciliation in pronouncing absolution on the truly penitent. St. Paul had a ministry of reconciliation alike for communicating and for excommunicated sinners. The former he used in chapter ii., the latter he is using here.

The concluding verses of the next chapter imply the right of the Church to purify itself from unworthy members. It does not signify to us at the moment whether " Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers " refers to marriages with heathens contracted after baptism, or to intercourse generally. The point is that the new Israel like the old is to be a " peculiar people," separate from the heathen. With such a calling the exercise of discipline upon sinners who reverted to heathenism must of necessity follow. The Hebrews were a peculiar people, but they would never have remained so had they not had the power of cutting off from themselves all who lapsed or relapsed into idolatry or pagan practices. By citing the example of a people who were to keep themselves apart from the surrounding nations by the use of rigid discipline St. Paul is committing himself to a statement of belief that such a discipline exists in the Christian Church. Indeed, had he not cited Isaiah at all his hearers without any previous or further instruction would surely have gathered that they were to administer discipline on all who would fail to draw a hard and fast line between the false and the true. This is, in fact, one of those passages in which the discipline of the apostolic Church is implied rather than stated in so many words.

Chapter vii., interesting as it is, does not add to our knowledge of the story of the incestuous man and the " puffed up " Corinthians. The mental and spiritual states so graphically described we could have imagined without further information. The two " sorrows " in verse 10 bring out a principle only too well known, and taught

elsewhere in Scripture. In this particular case the offender in particular and the whole Corinthian Church in general were led into a "godly sorrow." But it was possible for him and them to harden their hearts. They were Peters: they might have been Judases.

The actual processes are sixfold. There is, first of all, the "earnest care," as distinct from the callous and even proud indifference. Then the "clearing" of themselves, which seems to imply that they urged that their indifference was not a defiance of apostolic order, but rather an antinomian misunderstanding of the real nature of sin. Then the "indignation" at the wrong, then the "fear" wrought by a consideration of the punishment that must await both the sinner and those who had condoned the sin; the natural result being longing and zeal to undo the wrong done by themselves, and finally "avenging," which is the crucial word in the sentence, and must mean the vindication of the Church's holiness by the expulsion of the offender. He had sinned not only against God but against them and their laws, little as they had realized it at the first. That this must be the sense is clear from the next verse, in which the apostle assures them that his primary concern was not for the sinner nor for the wronged stepfather who was capable of looking after himself, but for the Church. It was the sense of a slight done to the community as a whole which was so grievously lacking at the first, but which earnest remonstrance and teaching were able to bring home. The discipline of the Church must always be, in part at any rate, a godly vengeance. The Church must protect herself against flagrant breaches of her laws.

The Epistle to the Galatians affords an opportunity of discussing the word "anathema" (i. 8, 9). Passing over such passages as Acts xxiii. 12, 14, 21, where it means a solemn vow, and Mark xiv. 71, where it is used of St. Peter's oath, there are four places in which the word is used. Romans ix. 3: "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake." 1 Corinthians xii. 3: "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." 1 Corinthians xvi. 22: "If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema. Maran Atha." And finally, Galatians

i. 8, 9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so now I say again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which we received, let him be anathema."

"Anathema" is the usual LXX. rendering of the Hebrew חֵרֶם. It was with herem at the back of his mind, so to say, that the apostle wrote these passages. That in the Romans represents the idea of herem completely. Two positions were open to any Jew who had been baptized. He must be herem from the law or herem from Christ. There were only two alternatives, and he was bound to choose one. As long as he remained a loyal Christian he must be herem from the law (ἀποσυνάγωγος, as in John xii. 42). But it was open to him to apostatize a second time, and return to the fold of Israel. In that case he must be herem from Christ. So great is his love for his brethren, his "kinsmen according to the flesh," that he could almost wish himself for their sakes anathema from Christ. He had tried both. He was anathema from Christ once, in the old persecuting days. And he looks back with a kind of tender wistfulness to the comradeship, companionship, and sympathy, national and religious, which he had held with his relations and friends. Nothing could have so successfully won their attention, at the least, if not their sympathy with his argument that fills the next three chapters, as this longing after the souls of those whom he had left. He was not the kind of man who having left one faith or form of the same faith for another feels nothing but contempt or animosity for those with whom in former days he had been in complete sympathy. But, of course, he was perfectly loyal to the faith of Christ, and therefore he must needs be as zealous for the new faith as he had been for the old. Stern discipline for an incestuous man might be enough. In the result it was. At least let it be tried. But for the avowed enemy there must be the herem, and nothing short of that would suffice. The errors of those whom he anathematizes in Galatians are well known. The expression at the end of 1 Corinthians is not so plain. "Loving the Lord Jesus" is after all rather vague. The word used (φιλεῖν) is that which was persistently used by St. Peter

after his denial (John xxi. 15–17). It was possible for him, after sinning more seriously than even the incestuous Corinthian, to lay claim to this love, even if he could not claim the ἀγάπη for which our Lord asked him. Perhaps the stress is not on "love" in this particular passage so much as on "the Lord Jesus." The world was divided into two classes, those who loved, with however many failings and backslidings, the Lord Jesus, and those who hated Him. It is the latter who are anathematized.

The remaining passage is 1 Corinthians xii. 3. For the interpretation of this the words of Denney (Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," article "Curse") may be quoted: "This *may* mean that no man speaking in the Spirit of God can do what Paul once tried to get the Christians to do—blaspheme Christ, i.e. speak profanely of Him, without defining more precisely how (Acts xxvi. 11). Or it may mean that no one speaking in the Spirit of God can speak of Christ as an object of hatred to God, as Jews with the Cross in their minds might do." Perhaps the former is the more likely of the two. These were Gentile Christians, as the verse before makes clear. They had in past times been "led away" unto "dumb idols." All the past was for ever renounced. A clear hard and fast line was revealed in their lives. Some of them might possibly have been led in the past to aver that "Jesus is anathema." But that had been spoken without the guidance of the Spirit of God, even against it. Corinth is divided into two factions: the Christians who say that "Jesus is Lord," guided by the Spirit of God, and the heathen who, if they mention Him at all, say "Jesus is anathema." These are the two grand divisions in Corinth and the world generally. But the apostle goes on to say that though all Christians are under the influence of the same Spirit, there are diversities of gifts. And it is to this that he is leading up.

Underlying all these passages there is the same idea. There is Christ and Antichrist. Each must of necessity be anathema to the other. Antichrist may take different forms. It may be heathen or Judaistic. But it is anti-Christ and therefore *ipso facto* "anathema." To quote again from Hastings' Dictionary: "When he says . . . 'let him be anathema,' he expresses in the strongest possible style his assurance that the gospel he preaches is the one

way of salvation, that to preach another is to make the grace of God vain, to stultify the death of Christ and to delude men, and that for such sins there can be nothing but a final irremediable judgment, to which he assents."

The dispute with St. Peter referred to in chapter ii. is closely allied to the anathema in chapter i. Not that there was ever any question of St. Peter being anathema. But he failed to see that his actions not only laid his attitude open to serious misconstruction, but were due to a misapprehension of the true relations of Christianity and Judaism. What St. Paul would have done if he had failed to persuade his brother apostle of the error of his ways is a matter for conjecture.

More relevant to our enquiry is the direction in chapter vi. 1. The word "restore" is open to misconstruction. There is no question here of restoring to communion. Καταρτίζετε cannot mean more than "mend." The bruised reed is not to be broken. Indeed, it does not seem that the Church as a whole is necessarily meant. Certainly the first part of the verse, with the "ye," looks as if it were addressed to the Church as a whole. But the person is changed to "thyself" and "thou," as if it were a mere personal matter between two Christians. "If thy brother sin against thee, go show him his fault between thee and him alone." This, if done "in a spirit of meekness," will not only "gain the brother," but inevitably restore him, that is, tend to his spiritual advancement. The use of the plural may justify the reference of the matter to the action of the community as well as of the individual. And though there is no mention of the exercise of any discipline, yet the result of the discipline is contemplated. Discipline administered and received in a spirit of meekness must result in "restoration" to spiritual health (which is the meaning in this passage) as well as to communion.

The next epistle, that to the Ephesians, does not contain much that will help our enquiry. Chapter v. 3–8 looks rather like a command to exercise discipline in certain cases. The Greek (μὴ γίνεσθε συνμέτοχοι) looks like a command to excommunicate. It is true that Moulton ("Prolegomena to Grammar of New Testament Greek") admits that the rule that μή with the present imperative always implies "do not do as you are doing now," while

holding good for the other New Testament writers, can only be forced on St. Paul "under strong pressure." It cannot be asserted, therefore, on grammatical grounds alone that the order is to excommunicate present members of immoral lives rather than to refuse to admit them as members while impenitent. συνμέτοχοι is itself rather a colourless word; one might be left in doubt whether the apostle means "do not take any share in their evil practices," or "do not let them share any longer in your Church privileges." But the same word is used in chapter iii. 6: "The Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body and fellow-partakers (συνμέτοχοι) of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel," and it seems therefore legitimate to take the word in the sense of partaking in Church privileges in this passage rather than of partaking in immoralities. The sense of chapter v. 7, I take therefore to be, "do not be fellow-partakers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel with fornicators, unclean persons, and covetous persons."

But is it a command to excommunicate or a command to refuse to admit to baptism? The context does not help us much. Both thoughts must be read into the words. There is no essential difference between refusing to let an unworthy man into the Church and turning him out if he develops unworthiness later after his admission. There is the discipline which repels and the discipline which expels, but they are different phases of the same process. It seems reasonable to believe that the readers of this epistle, whoever they were, would naturally assume that the apostle meant them to take steps for the purification of the Church, and they must have realized that that process, if it could not be accomplished by rigid scrutiny of all catechumens, must be supplemented by some form of discipline, ending if need be in excommunication. Later in the chapter he gives his ideal of the Church (27). That must remain an ideal. The smallest sin in the worthiest and saintliest of Church members is a "spot" and a "wrinkle." The question in this as in most other things is, where is the line to be drawn? But the difficulty of knowing where it is to be drawn should not deter us from drawing it somewhere. It is only necessary to read such a passage as vi. 10–20, which can be paralleled, as every student of the New Testament knows, over and over again,

from the earliest recorded words of our Lord to the end of the Apocalypse, to see that there was an ideal of life in the apostolic church from which much that calls itself Christianity can only be described as a grievous declension.

The Epistle to the Philippians contains two warnings against the influences of evil men (iii. 2): "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision." This refers to men outside the Church; but what of 17–19? It seems likely that they too are "without." There is a parallel between the two passages. In the first passage the Philippians are to beware of the Jews and Jewish influences, remembering that *they* are the real circumcision, that of the heart; while in the second passage they are to beware of the grosser practices and influences of the Gentile world around them, remembering that their citizenship is in heaven, and that the things that are God's are more important than the things that are Cæsar's. The next epistle does not yield much to our enquiry. The Colossians and Laodicæans are bidden to "walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how to answer each one."

In the first Epistle to the Thessalonians we find a command (v. 14) to "admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all." What form the disorderliness might take is not stated. The word is as colourless in the Greek (ἀτάκτους) as in the English. All that can be inferred is that there was to be order of some kind or other and that those who proved rebellious to it were, in the first instance at any rate, to be "admonished." The second epistle is more definite. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they (or ye) received from us." The word is the same (ἀτάκτως) as in the first epistle. Nor are we helped by the next verse where the same word is used. "For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly (οὐκ ἠτακτήσαμεν) among you." Westcott and Hort evidently connect it very closely with the next clause, "neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hands," for they put no stop

between the two clauses, considering that living on other men's labour was the form or the chief form which the disorderliness took. The revisers, on the other hand, put a semicolon after the first clause, which certainly seems more convincing. The point, however, is not of great importance. There were disorderly men, whom the Thessalonians are ordered in the first epistle to admonish, and here to be in some way avoided. στέλλεσθαι is not a very definite word. In 2 Corinthians viii. 20 it is rendered "avoid," of a thing. There is no necessary suggestion of excommunication. Probably some kind of separation is implied. It is not that the man is to be separated from the Church, but rather that the Church is to avoid the man. It seems at least reasonable to infer that, if the previous admonition had failed of its purpose, the offender might, while still enjoying such Church privileges as he cared to avail himself of, be treated with a certain coldness, ostracized socially if not yet ecclesiastically. Or an act of discipline may be implied, the man being refused communion for a space. But no definite conclusion can be reached from such vague premisses. Disorderliness was a fault, and the disorderly are to be first admonished, and then withdrawn from.

The pastoral epistles, written to rulers and heads of churches rather than to the actual churches themselves, might be expected to be more explicit in the matter of the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. The most obvious passages are 1 Timothy i. 20 and 2 Timothy ii. 17, 18: "Of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme." "Their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus, men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some." There is no reason why the same Hymenæus should not be referred to in each epistle. We must obviously come to this conclusion, more especially as there is no strong evidence to the contrary. In this case the man is not accused of incest, but of heresy. The exact nature of the heresy need not detain us. It was probably of a gnostic kind, and Hymenæus in that case would be teaching that matter was inherently evil, and that any union with matter in a future state would be

unthinkable. In that case the resurrection was already past and done with. The convert, having risen with Christ in the water of baptism (Col. iii. 1) would have had his only true resurrection, the resurrection of the spirit. This heresy was punished as the incest at Corinth was punished. Both men were delivered unto Satan, involving separation from the community of the faithful and some bodily disease. In each case the punishment was remedial. The incestuous man was delivered unto Satan that "the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," while here Hymenæus and Alexander are delivered unto Satan "that they might be taught not to blaspheme." So, too, Elymas was blind "for a season."

One difference there is. The process at Corinth was what would be called democratic, since the whole Church was involved in the excommunication (1 Cor. v. 3–5). Here it is more autocratic—"whom I delivered unto Satan." But that need not imply that the apostle did not consult the Church. It may be noticed that it is at least doubtful if Hymenæus was resident at Ephesus. St. Paul would not be at the trouble of informing Timothy of the nature of his heresy if Timothy knew him. We must assume that Hymenæus was a heretic living and teaching in some town near Ephesus, and as likely to teach his false doctrines in Ephesus after having been expelled from the Church of his native place. Whether he recanted his errors we do not know. Alexander, who is coupled with Hymenæus in 1 Timothy i. 20, is probably the same as Alexander the coppersmith of 2 Timothy iv. 14. In that case he, too, is expected to visit Ephesus, "of whom be thou ware also." Doubtless these two men would travel together, trying to gnosticize the infant churches in Asia Minor. If 2 Timothy iv. 16–18 could be assumed with any confidence to refer to verse 15 and not to a defence at Cæsarea or Rome we should have an extremely interesting case of a local church refusing to accede to one of its members being put under discipline. But though possible, it seems more natural to assume that a complete break of thought takes place after verse 15.

Passing by the mention of the functions of bishops and deacons, who alike are charged to rule their own houses but for rather different reasons (iii. 5 ; iii. 13), and the wise counsel to one who was youthful in v. 1, 2, we come to

the interesting advice in v. 19–25. Timothy is warned against some obvious mistakes that one who was young and not used to the exercise of discipline might make. Hort ("The Christian Ecclesia") has a useful note on verse 22: "Lay hands hastily on no one, neither be in fellowship with the sins of others: keep thyself pure." This verse stands next to the adjuration against the showing of favour or prejudice by Timothy in his sanctioning special honour for some elders, and himself receiving accusations and uttering rebukes in the case of others. It is followed by the verse bidding Timothy be no longer a water-drinker. Thus it stands between five verses relating to elders and a single verse relating to Timothy's own imprudent adoption of a questionable form of ἁγνεία, or ceremonial purity. In this position the laying on of hands is by most commentators, as also by such of the Greek fathers as notice the verse, interpreted of ordination, i.e. of the elders previously mentioned; the other equally familiar laying on of hands, that connected with baptism and eventually known as Confirmation, being evidently out of place here. This view is certainly possible, but it suits rather imperfectly the strong phrase, "be not partaker in the sins of others"; and it makes an additional precept about elders come in *after* that solemn adjuration, the natural place of such a precept being *before* the adjuration. There is much greater probability in the view taken by some Latin fathers, by our own Hammond, "who defends it at great length, and by a few recent critics, including Dr. Ellicott, that the laying on of hands, the act symbolical of blessing, was here the act of blessing by which penitents were received back into the communion of the faithful (cf. 2 Cor. ii. 6 f.). The practice was certainly widely spread among Christians not more than four or five generations later, and as Hammond points out, the principle of it is involved in the laying on of hands on the sick accepted from others and practised by our Lord Himself repeatedly, as also by St. Paul (Acts xxviii. 8), even as by Ananias in restoring St. Paul's own sight (Acts ix. 12, 17), and probably implied in James v. 14 (*προσευξάσθωσαν ἐπ' αὐτόν*)."

The second Epistle to Timothy contains the advice about Hymenæus (ii. 17), which we have already noticed,

but verses 24–26 in the same chapter demand consideration. He is urged to be "gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting (*παιδεύοντα*) them that oppose themselves; *μή ποτε δώη αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς μετάνοιαν εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας, καὶ ἀνανήψωσιν ἐκ τῆς τοῦ διαβόλου παγίδος, ἐζωγρημένοι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ἐκείνου θέλημα.*" These words may be translated in various different senses: (*a*) "If peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by the Lord's servant unto the will of God" (R.V.); (*b*) "taken captive by the devil according unto God's will"; (*c*) "that they may return to soberness out of the snare of the devil, although taken captive by him, so as thereafter to do God's will"; (*d*) "taken captive by him at his will" (A.V.). The last rendering may be dismissed as impossible. It is true that *ἐκεῖνος* can be used in an emphatic sense (cf. iv. 8), but not when it is in such close juxtaposition to *αὐτός* (cf. iii. 9), (*b*) would require *κατά*, rather than *εἰς*. We are left then with the alternative of (*a*) or (*c*). It is either the servant of God who takes the penitent captive with a view to the fulfilment of God's will, or it is the devil who takes captive with the result that the penitent returns to the will of God. There is, of course, excellent authority for the use of *ζωγρεῖν*, that of our Lord Himself. "From henceforth ye shall catch men" (Luke v. 10). The only difficulty attaching to (*a*) is the comparative distance of "the Lord's servant" from the *αὐτοῦ*. It is not a difficulty that the revisers felt, or rather it did not prevent them from adopting (*a*). In any case the reference is to penitential discipline. Some human ministration is implied; and it is not the ministration of layman to layman, but the ministration of one who is to be "apt to teach," and is to "correct in meekness them that oppose themselves." He is acting not in a private but in a public character, and in this capacity he is to reclaim those who have fallen into the snare of the devil. It is at least possible that there is an implied reference to the delivery to Satan which took place both in the case of the incestuous man at Corinth and in that of Hymenæus and his fellows.

The advice to Titus does not differ materially from that

to Timothy. Judaizers are to be "reproved sharply" (i. 13). Titus is to "exhort and to reprove with authority" (ii. 15). The counsel in chapter iii. 1, 2 is general. An obedient attitude of mind is enjoined, but not necessarily to the ecclesiastical authorities more than to the civil. Verses 10 and 11, however, contain a definite command to exercise discipline. "A man that is heretical (or 'factious,' *αἱρετικόν*) after a first and second admonition refuse (or 'avoid,' *παραιτοῦ*), knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned." This probably refers to total excommunication. It looks like an echo of Matthew xviii. 16, 17. Every chance of clearing himself is to be given to the man, but if he persists, he is to be refused.

The Epistle to Philemon naturally contains nothing that bears on the subject of discipline, being a purely private and personal matter.

"Epistola ad Hebræos non legitur propter Novatianos," wrote Philastrius (de Her. 41), and the more austere forms of Christianity have found much support from its teaching. A somewhat lengthy examination of the passages dealing with discipline will be necessary in view of Philastrius' remark.

In chapter iii. 12–16 the readers are warned against the peril of "an evil heart of unbelief," even if only existing in one member of the Church, for fear of the infection spreading. The antidote is mutual exhortation.

Sterner words are used in chapter vi. 4–8. The baptismal privileges are first enumerated. The converts enjoyed five blessings. They were enlightened, they tasted of the heavenly gift, they were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, they tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the age to come. All things were theirs, and yet they fell away. The apostasy is final. Five successive aorist participles, strengthened by the *ἅπαξ* at the beginning, emphasize the completeness of the first illumination and the subsequent fall. It is impossible to renew them to repentance. "The use of the active voice limits the strict application of the words to human agency" (Westcott). So far the passage would seem to be all in favour of the rigorist sects. But the writer goes on to add, "seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (R.V.). But the Revised Version margin gives "The

while." Which rendering is to be preferred? Plainly that in the text does not modify the original statement, but merely explains it, while the marginal rendering gives a loophole, makes an exception. We must turn to the noun μετάνοια to help in the translation of the participles ἀνασταυροῦντας and παραδειγματίζοντας. Westcott writes: "The end of this renewal is μετάνοια, a complete change of mind consequent upon the apprehension of the true moral nature of things. It follows necessarily that in this large sense there can be no second μετάνοια (comp. ver. 1). The popular idea of repentance, by which it is limited to sorrow for the past, has tended to obscure the thought here." If this can be the only possible meaning of repentance the participles must be causal, "Seeing that. . . ." But is this the only rendering of μετάνοια? Luke xvii. 3, 4 implies that repentance can be repeated indefinitely. 2 Corinthians vii. 8, 9 shows that the word can be used of Christians who were not apostate, had not been excommunicated, but none the less had sinned by condoning sin. Matthew Arnold wrote: "We translate it 'repentance,' the mourning and lamenting for our sins, and we translate it wrongly. Of *metanoia*, as Jesus used the word, the lamenting one's sins was a small part; the main part was something far more active and fruitful, the setting up an immense new inward movement for obtaining the rule of life. And *metanoia* is accordingly *a change in the inner man.*" There is much truth in the words, and it is a pity that "contrition" cannot be used more generally for sorrow for sin, and "repentance" for the change of heart and the necessary corollary of a change of life. But in view of the passage cited from Luke it does not seem that according to our Lord there can be one and only one repentance. The writer of the Hebrews seems then to be insisting on the truth that when a man has apostasized and remains obstinately tenacious of his error, crucifying his Master afresh, it is impossible to bring him to a change of mind. But he is not asserting that, given the necessary conditions, he cannot be renewed to repentance. Westcott's additional note on this passage is most valuable. He shows that Novatian and his immediate followers do not cite the passage in their favour, but that his successors in the fourth century appealed to it in their favour, and he cites

Greek and Latin fathers who are unanimous in referring the renewal to a second baptism, repudiating the idea that a second repentance was impossible.

The next passage is very similar (x. 26–30). In the former we are told that "it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance," and in the latter that "there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins." Plainly there is no contradiction here. The two things are necessary always, the *metanoia* on the part of the sinner and the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and neither is of avail without the other. It is remarkable, however, that the Revised Version does not give any variant rendering of the participle here. Westcott quotes Theophylact: "Notice that he did not say 'sinned' but 'sin,' that is, continue in sin without repentance." Rendering the participle in the temporal sense we have a repetition of the truth enforced in chapter vi. that certain states of mind secure immunity from divine grace; in the former passage it is the helplessness of the Church that is emphasized, in the latter that of Christ.

The strongest exhortation to the exercise of Church discipline is contained in chapter xii. 15–17. We have here not the vague and colourless βλέπετε ("take heed") of chapter iii. 12, but the more definite ἐπισκοποῦντες ("looking carefully"), a word "which expresses the careful regard of those who occupy a position of responsibility" (Westcott). A "root of bitterness," that is, some evil influence, may spring up, and the many may be defiled, as had occurred at Corinth. He may be, as in Corinth, a fornicator, or he may be "a profane person, as Esau." There can be little doubt that the Revised Version is right in placing the words, "for he found no place of repentance," in a bracket. Apart from any question of the Greek words, it is difficult to see how a man can seek carefully for repentance, with tears, and fail to find it. The Greek forbids us to refer the object of the search to the *place* of repentance, though this would yield an excellent sense, and we must therefore translate as the revisers do. Westcott is worth quoting: "The obstacles to holiness are gathered up under two heads, those which centre in the man himself, and those which concern his view of divine gifts. A man may fail by personal impurity: he may fail also by disregard

of the blessings of God. Esau is a characteristic example of the latter form of sin, as one who by birth occupied a position of prerogative which he recklessly sacrificed for an immediate and sensuous pleasure. The Hebrews, on their part, might also barter their blessings as first-born in the Church for the present outward consolations of the material Temple service. Peace with Judaism might be bought at the price of Christian holiness. . . . The consequences of Esau's act reached farther than he cared to look (*even afterward*). In spite of his impulsive disregard of divine things he retained still some sense of God's promise, and sought to secure what had naturally belonged to him. Thus his profane irreverence was seen in a new form. He paid no heed to his own act, but wished to occupy the position which he had voluntarily abandoned. He had sold the right of the first-born, and yet, as if that were a trivial thing, he claimed to inherit the blessing which belonged to it. . . . The son who had sacrificed his right could not undo the past, and it is this only which is in question. No energy of sorrow or self-condemnation, however sincere, could restore to him the prerogative of the first-born. The consideration of the forgiveness of his sin against God, as distinct from the reversal of the temporary consequences of his sin, lies wholly without the argument."

It is necessary to distinguish carefully between the states of mind contemplated by the writer in chapters vi. and x. and here. In the earlier passages the apostate is not so far gone that he cannot return. So long as he crucifies the Son of God afresh, and sins wilfully, he cannot be renewed again to repentance. Indeed, he will not seek it. But it is still open to him to repent, and seek readmission to the place he has forfeited. But in chapter xii. we see the apostate in a more advanced stage of apostasy. Seeking carefully with tears the privileges of membership he can find no place of repentance. The obstacle is not so much in the Church as in himself. He has passed the stage of penitent Peter; he is remorseful Judas.

> "Try what repentance can: What can it not?
> Yet what can it when one cannot repent?
> O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
> O limed soul; that, struggling to be free,
> Art sore engaged!"



The Early Church need not have been so afraid of reading this epistle. It might have shown that, strongly and sternly as the author speaks, he is never suggesting that a return is ever, so far as the Church is concerned, impossible. The Father is always awaiting the return of the prodigal: but what if the prodigal cannot "come to himself"?

The last passage that needs comment is chapter xiii. 10. The writer does not merely assert that there is a Christian altar as well as a Jewish; he goes further, and adds that those who serve the tabernacle have no right to partake of it. The Christian altar as well as the Jewish must be hedged round with safeguards. The time had long passed when the few faithful could attend the ministrations of Judaism (Luke xxiv. 53). Official Jewry could conceive of no possible attitude to adopt to Christianity but excommunication and persecution, and the new faith had to excommunicate the old.

The Epistle of James has only one passage containing any hint of discipline in the Church. In chapter v. 14, 15 the sick man is enjoined to call for the elders of the Church, who will pray over him, anointing him with oil, "and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed." It is possible, if not probable, that the writer has in his mind the incident of Matthew ix. 2 *sqq*. In view of the close connection between mind and body there may be a reference to sin which has brought on, either as a natural cause, or owing to the sentence of the Church, some form of malady (cf. John v. 14; 1 Cor. xi. 39; 1 Cor. v. 5). The confession of sins mentioned here cannot obviously be of a private or auricular kind. The writer is not contemplating the confession of one sinner to the man he has wronged, nor of the sinner to the priest. The confession is made to the whole Church, or at least to some few members of it. Knowledge of the sin and the accompanying circumstances will direct their intercessions. The whole thing is purely voluntary: there is no hint of any discipline as such. But the passage is of value from the stress it lays on the idea of sin as a wrong

done not merely to God, or the individual wronged, but to the community.

The first Epistle of Peter contains little that will help forward our enquiry. There is only the word of exhortation to the elders which finds a parallel in the Epistles of St. Paul (1 Peter v. 1–5). The elders are to be shepherds, tending the flock, they are to exercise oversight not under any feeling of compulsion (for this must be the force of ἀναγκαστῶς), but as performers of a task which is at all times a pleasure ; with an eagerness begotten not of any emoluments, but of love for the work itself ; not " lording down " the charge committed to them, but teaching primarily by example. They are to be the shepherds of the flock, tending it until the chief shepherd shall appear. It is a somewhat unaccountable fact that the word " pastor " is used as a variant of minister among those bodies of Christians who are the farthest removed from any error which can be called sacerdotal. And yet the shepherd, if the metaphor is to be pressed, is necessarily somewhat of an autocrat, benevolent, as in Psalm xxiii., but an autocrat none the less, the more so in an Oriental land, with its dangers from wild beasts, its scanty pasture and arid climate. The hireling would do his work more or less well, but he must needs work " of constraint," and " for filthy lucre." The good shepherd will always lay down his life for the sheep, but he is none the less a ruler, and " exercises oversight."

The second Epistle of Peter (so-called) need not detain us, as it contains nothing that bears upon the subject.

The first Epistle of John is written, as, indeed, are all the epistles, to Christians who are a tiny little group, threatened with persecution from the authorities and the baleful influences of Judaism or paganism as the case may be. Whatever differences may underlie the epistles this is common to them all. Those to whom St. John writes are warned against the Antichrist, which he defines as the denial of the Father and the Son. Some had already seceded (ii. 18, 19). It may be that they were excommunicated. " They went out from us " may be a charitable way of stating that they were expelled. More probably, however, it means that they seceded voluntarily, finding their position intolerable. In either case it proves how closely the Christians guarded the deposit of faith. The marginal rendering in the

Revised Version, "that not all are of us," whether correct or not, represents the attitude of the early Christians. They were exclusive because Christianity is, in the truest sense of the word, exclusive. Similarly in chapter iv. 1–3 we come across the same phenomenon as appeared at Corinth (1 Cor. xii. 3). The Christians were as liable to be led by false spirits as by the true. The test proposed here is the same as that proposed by St. Paul, namely, the affirmation or the denial of the Godhead of Christ.

With respect to chapter v. 16, 17, the note by Westcott in his Commentary (p. 198) should be studied. "In the first and simplest sense a 'sin unto death' would be a sin requiring the punishment of natural death (comp. Num. xviii. 22; *ἁμαρτία θανατηφόρος*). Death in such a case was final exclusion from the Divine Society. . . . If now the same line of thought is extended to the Christian Society it will appear that a sin which in its very nature excludes from fellowship with Christians would be rightly spoken of as a 'sin unto death.' Such a sin may be seen in hatred of the brethren (iii. 15), or in the selfishness which excludes repentance, the condition of forgiveness (i. 7), or in the faithlessness which denies Christ, the one Advocate (v. 21; iv. 2). But in each case the character of the sin is determined by the effect which it has on the relation of the doer to God through Christ in the Divine Society. We are not to think of specific acts, defined absolutely, but of acts as the revelation of moral life. It must be noticed, further, that as St. John speaks of the sin as 'tending to death' (*πρὸς θάνατον*) and not as necessarily involving death. Death is, so to speak, its natural consequence, if it continue, and not its inevitable issue as a matter of fact. Its character is assumed to be unquestionable, and its presence open and notorious. The question then could not but arise, How is such flagrant sin in a brother—a fellow-Christian—to be dealt with? For it must be remembered that the words of the apostle are directed to those who are members of the Christian Church, sharing in the privileges of the common life. The answer follows naturally from a view of the normal efficacy of Christian intercession. The power of prayer avails for those who belong to the Body (comp. John xiii. 10). But for those who are separated from the Body for a time or not yet included in it, the ordinary exercise

of the energy of spiritual sympathy has, so far as we are taught directly, no promise of salutary influence. The use of common prayer in such cases is not enjoined ; though it must be observed that it is not forbidden. St. John does not command intercession when the sin is seen, recognized by the brother, in its fatal intensity ; but, on the other hand, he does not expressly exclude it. Even if the tenor of his words may seem to dissuade such prayer, it is because the offender lies without the Christian Body, excluded from its life but yet not beyond the creative, vivifying power of God." There seems to be a parallel between the thought here and that in James v. 15. The difference lies in the fact that St. James contemplates a certain number of elders engaged in prayer for the healing of bodily and, if necessary, of spiritual infirmity as well, acting as representatives of the Church in its corporate capacity. St. John is contemplating the private intercession of one brother for another. Further, St. James does not contemplate the case of a man who has sinned " unto death," while St. John contemplates both kind of sins. But we have plain evidence here of sin which by its deathward tendency excludes the sinner at any rate from any distinct claim on the prayers of a brother. The mere fact of the sin has excluded him from a place in his intercessions.

The second and third Epistles of John yield more material compared with their length than any books of the New Testament. " The deceiver and the antichrist " (ii. 7) is one who " goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ." " True progress," as Westcott truly says, " includes the past." On the other hand, " He that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." This is to be in the nature of a password, and anyone who does not repeat it is to be refused admission. If the letter is written to a church, then admission to church privileges is refused ; if it is written to some woman, then it is admission into her house that is forbidden. The point can never be settled, nor does it make any great difference to our enquiry. Verses 10 and 11 certainly lend colour to the hypothesis, in itself the more natural of the two, that the letter is written to some lady, and in that case we have a hint as to the extent to which excommunication went. It was not in religious ceremonies only that the excommunicated person

had no admission, but even to the ordinary social hospitality of the Christian. And, indeed, the prohibition is but natural. To entertain an excommunicated person in a social way would be certain to cause to stumble one of the weak brethren, though in itself possibly a harmless act. To entertain angels unawares is one thing ; to entertain their opposites and be quite aware of it is another !

The third epistle is concerned with Diotrephes. Exactly what his error consisted in we do not know. Westcott says : " There is nothing to indicate that Diotrephes held false opinions : his ambition only is blamed." It certainly was on a large scale. Love of the pre-eminence is not incompatible in itself with loyalty to the Church as well as to revealed truth. There are characters who are made to lead ; they can do excellent work as leaders, though it would be better work if it were not marred by a certain tendency to lording it over the flock. But Diotrephes went further. He prated against the apostle with evil words, and created something in the nature of a schism, by excommunicating the brethren and refusing candidates for baptism, unless, one may presume, they would submit to his discipline or accede to his views. More one cannot say for certain. It would have been difficult to excommunicate him ; in a sense he had excommunicated himself. " Fas est et ab hoste doceri," and he had turned the Church's weapon against herself. That does not imply that it was a bad weapon ; it only needed to be in the right hands.

The general Epistle of Jude deals with certain men who were corrupting the Church. It does not matter what their false teaching was. It was evidently some novelty, for the faithful were urged to contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. They did not hesitate to join in the communion of the Church (12) and constituted themselves as their own shepherds, and made separations in the Church. What is to be done with them does not appear. The policy outlined in 22, 23 does not cover them. Those who are hesitating between faith and infidelity are, as is natural, to be dealt with mercifully ; some who have already made the choice are to be snatched out of the fire, and certain others not specified are also to be treated with mercy, on the ground that the disease has, as it were, infected only their clothes and not themselves as

yet. But this treatment cannot have been intended for those against whom the main body of the epistle is directed in terms of the utmost sternness. The uncertainty of the text may account for what certainly seems to be an omission.

More perhaps than any book of the Bible the Apocalypse has been the victim of theory-mongers. A little ingenuity is a dangerous thing, and after Luther was as convinced that 666 was the pope as the pope was convinced that Luther could be none other than 666, it behoves the student to be wary. The messages to the seven churches are, however, not in keeping with the rest of the book. Whether they formed part of it originally may be doubted, but in any event we can go to chapters ii. and iii. with as much safety as to any of the epistles.

The Church at Ephesus is praised for deliberately trying certain men who claimed apostleship. They were apparently found false. Here, however, we find an instance in which, apparently, the discipline administered or proposed was too stern for the writer's approval. For his sake, or rather for the sake of him "that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand," they had patience and even now were not weary. It seems probable, if one reads between the lines, that the Church had proposed, being unable to bear evil men, to deal with them summarily. The apostle, one may conjecture, intervened with counsels of patience and probation. Still, there had been some falling away. The undue rigour and lack of patience and that charity that hopeth all things were possible symptoms of this partial lapse. Still, they hated the Nicolaitans, which was in their favour. Here at least we find a Church willing, even too willing, to expel those whose teachings she rightly hated.

A similar faithfulness was evinced by the Christians in Smyrna. Here the opposition was Jewish. The tribulation of ten days is merely a figure of speech. There is no period of ten days in the discipline of the Jewish Church. It would, of course, have been impossible for the Jews to have secured the imprisonment of the Christians merely on the ground that they were not Jews, in a place like Smyrna, but the Christians remembering the story of our Lord's death would not expect the Jews to stop short at herem. They could be accused to the Romans and punished on some frivolous charge.

The Christians at Pergamum were not so faithful, for they had coquetted with paganism, and the heresy of the Nicolaitans. The faithful are urged to repent of their backsliding, or the apostates will find that the apostle is prepared to exercise the discipline which the converts were not willing to exercise for themselves.

The Church at Thyatira was infected with the same craving for the sensual delights of paganism, incited by one so-called prophetess who is here denoted by the significant name, Jezebel. She had already been given time to repent. Refusing to repent she is cast out and left to her evil practices, and her followers are threatened with the same fate. Here again the Church was lax in the exercise of the disciplinary powers entrusted to her. There had been no falling away, rather the contrary; but ignorance of "the deep things of Satan" had led them to palliate, at least in some measure, that which deserved the severest and most uncompromising treatment.

The Church at Sardis was in a worse plight. Here, indeed, "the faithful are minished from amongst the children of men." There are but a few who have retained their integrity. They are urged to remain faithful.

The Philadelphians were also pestered with the synagogue of Satan. Here again it is apparent that they were willing to exercise discipline upon Christians who were inclined to lapse. They are encouraged to be patient; all will be well in the end; the lapsed will return. "I will make them to come and worship before Thy feet."

The Laodicæans have become proverbial for lukewarmness. There is no evidence that there had been any lapse into heresy, although they were presumably liable to infection from Gnostic teachings, if the Epistle to Colossæ which the Laodicæans were to read be any guide. It may have been their very lukewarmness that made them less of a prey to seductions from outside; they had no desire for anything at all, good or bad, false or true. "As many as I love, I reprove and chasten," and it is in that spirit that discipline, whether it be that of an apostle to a lukewarm church, or a red-hot church to its renegades, must be administered.

The rest of the Apocalypse is of such a character that it is impossible to deduce from it any information as to

any particular practice of the early Church. It deals with "the last things," and things temporal are seen in the light of things eternal. There is one passage in the last chapter which deals more or less with the problem under discussion. It is frankly recognized that a time comes in the life of every individual when his destiny is fixed. "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteous still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still." In the margin is the significant variant "yet more" for "still." This is admirably brought out in the sermon on "The effect of the gospel," in Archbishop Magee's "Christ the Light of all Scripture." There comes a time in every man's development when his character is, broadly speaking, fixed. And the summary is this: "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone that loveth and maketh a lie."

CHAPTER IV

THE SUB-APOSTOLIC AGE

THE old idea that "the Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants" is, to say the least, less axiomatic than it was. The study of the history of the Canon has shown that while some books had to struggle hard for their place, others, but little known to any but professed students, were once included among the sacred writings. The result has been that the hard and fast line that used to be drawn between the Canon and all the other religious books ever written is not so hard and fast as it was once. It is felt that we must interpret the New Testament by the writings and lives of those who lived nearest to it in point of time. Again, allowance is being made for development under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The promise to lead into all the truth is still being fulfilled. The apostles in the upper room at Jerusalem had no written code to guide them; there were the sayings of Christ, some of them written down, yet most of them stored up in their minds. At the most they were but principles. It was the task of the Church to adapt those principles to its everyday life. They had the mission to preach forgiveness of sins and to impart it. That baptism did convey full remission of all sin they never doubted for a moment. How they dealt with post-baptismal sin we have seen. Anything like a formal policy they had not, as yet: it would hardly be expected that they should. They lived in constant expectation of the Second Coming, believing that it would in all probability come in their own lifetime. And, indeed, if they misunderstood our Lord's teaching on this point, as they must have done, they can hardly be blamed for it. Little by little, however, they must have felt that some misunderstanding had taken place, and so they had to adapt themselves to the new conditions,

and provide for a more or less deferred Coming. Again, the constant dread of persecution (and here at any rate they had not misunderstood anything they had been told) must have acted as an automatic purge on the Church. A persecuted church gets its discipline from its enemies. Until the edict of Milan the Church lived in a state of constant terror, and this must have acted as a deterrent to possible candidates for baptism, weeding out all the lukewarm. Further, the very careful instruction which the catechumens received must also have tended to complete the weeding-out process. With little to gain (from a this-worldly point of view) and everything to lose, it is but natural that the early Christians made up in quality what they lacked in quantity. Never, it may be, has there been a time when a regular and systematic discipline was less needed. On the other hand, in one sense it was more needed than it is now. The scandal at Corinth would be impossible nowadays. People feel that there is a certain standard that must be attained by the communicant, and it is hardly to be conceived that anyone living in incest would dare to approach the altar. That being the case, it may be felt that any revival of the Church's discipline would be superfluous. Most priests would confess that it is but rare that anyone wholly unworthy intrudes his presence at the Holy Mysteries. If he has done so regularly or irregularly, he generally absents himself directly he has fallen, if not some time before. The result is that a man is either a communicant or excommunicates himself. That is so far to the good, and shows at least that there is some understanding of what the Church stands for. But it may at least be argued that there is room for some process of excommunication.

The first passage to be discussed is that in the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. It would seem from it that the tendency to splits and schisms which had been noticed and rebuked by St. Paul continued. Clement writes rebuking them. The passage which most concerns us is in chapter lvii. " Do ye therefore, who laid the foundation of this faction, submit to the elders, and be disciplined unto penitence, bending the knees of your heart ; learn to submit, laying aside arrogance and the disdainful wilfulness of your speech ; for it is better to be found in the flock of Christ little and approved, than to seem to have the pre-eminence

and be cast out of His hope (or ' fold ')." Here, of course, μετάνοια does not mean " penance "—that would be to read into the passage a later sense of the word—but plainly there is to be an exercise of discipline which is to result in penitence (εἰς μετάνοιαν). No doubt some form of penance was given them, although it might be of a light character, but the sin of electing rival presbyters needed some public acknowledgment of error. For the ordinary everyday sins, if one may so term them, Clement does not urge anything more drastic than the ordinary confession of sin to God (cf. ii. 3) : " Stretch forth your hands to Almighty God, imploring Him to have mercy, if you have unwillingly sinned." So again in chapter vii. 3 he speaks of " the blood of Christ which was poured out for our salvation hath brought down to all the world the grace of repentance."

Ignatius uses μετάνοια either of the heathen's repentance for his former sins or that of the schismatic who returns to the discipline of the Church ; never of the Christian who, while remaining in the unity of the Church, has sinned grievously against her laws (see Eph. x. 1 ; Smyr. iv. 1, ix. 1 ; Philad. iii. 2, viii. 1.)

The Didache mentions public confession as necessary for the Eucharist—chapter iv. 14 : " In the Church thou shalt confess thy sins " ; chapter xiv. 1 : " Confessing your sins beforehand." Barnabas has a statement to the same effect (xix. 12).

The Shepherd of Hermas marks a distinct development in the idea of penitential discipline. The first passage to note is as follows :—

Mandate IV. iii. : (1) " ' I have heard, Sir,' say I, ' from certain teachers that there is no other repentance, save that which took place when we went down into the water and obtained remission of our former sins.' (2) He saith unto me, ' Thou hast well heard, for so it is. For he that hath received remission of sins ought no longer to sin, but to dwell in purity. (3) But since thou enquirest all things accurately, I will declare unto thee this also, so as to give no excuse to those who shall hereafter believe, or those who have already believed in the Lord. For they that have already believed, or shall hereafter believe, have not repentance for sins, but have only remission of their former sins. (4) To those then that were called before these days

the Lord hath appointed repentance. For the Lord, being a discerner of hearts and foreknowing all things perceived the weakness of men and the manifold wiles of the devil, how that he will be doing some mischief to the servants of God, and will deal wickedly with them. (5) The Lord then being very compassionate had pity on His handiwork, and appointed this (opportunity of) repentance, and to me was given the authority over this repentance. (6) But I say unto you,' saith he, ' if after this great and holy calling anyone being tempted of the devil shall commit sin, he hath only one (opportunity of) repentance. But if he sin off-hand and repent, repentance is unprofitable to such a man, for he shall live with difficulty.' (7) I say unto him, ' I was quickened unto life when I heard these things from thee more precisely.' "

Here we have the first sign of the battle that was to rage hereafter between those who allowed and those who denied post-baptismal repentance for grave sin. Hermas admits the ideal ; baptism conveys forgiveness of all sin, and the baptized should sin no more. Still, as a practical accommodation to the weakness of mankind, this second chance is given.

To the same effect may be quoted the following :—

Mandate IV. i. : (7) " ' If then, Sir,' say I, ' after the wife is divorced she repent and desire to return to her own husband, shall she not be received ? ' (8) ' Certainly,' saith he, ' if the husband receiveth her not, he sinneth and bringeth great wrath upon himself ; nay, one who hath sinned and repented must be received, yet not often ; for there is but one repentance to the servants of God.' "

The angel, indeed, is called " the angel of repentance," and is appointed to preside over the penitential discipline generally, as the next two passages show :—

Revelation : (5) " ' If then when ye hear them ye keep them and walk in them and do them with a pure heart, ye shall receive from the Lord all things that He promised ; but if when ye hear them ye did not repent, but still add to your sins, ye shall receive from the Lord the opposite.' All these things the shepherd, the angel of repentance, commanded me so to write."

Mandate IV. ii. : (2) " ' I,' saith he, ' preside over repent-

ance and I give understanding to all who repent. Nay, thinkest thou not,' saith he, ' that this very act of repentance is understanding ? ' "

This passage shows that the idea which we associate with the word " penance " has crept in. Certainly it is as yet a self-inflicted penance. But it is but a short step from the Church ordering a man to afflict himself and the Church inflicting the penance. It is, indeed, only the unhappy associations of the word that make us fight shy of it. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* Here at any rate it is plain that the one post-baptismal repentance that is available for the sinner must be no half-hearted affair.

The following passages from Hermas may also be quoted :—

Parable the eighth, xi. : (1) " He saith unto me, ' Go and tell all men to repent and they shall live unto God ; for the Lord in His compassion sent me to give repentance to all, though some of them do not deserve it for their deeds . . . (3) As many ' (saith he) ' as (shall repent) from their whole heart (and) shall cleanse themselves from all the evil deeds afore mentioned, and shall add nothing further to their sins, shall receive healing from the Lord for their former sins, unless they be double-minded concerning these commandments, and they shall live unto God.' "

Here " repentance " plainly means " an opportunity for repentance," so that the force of the passage is, " I am sent to receive into the status of penitents all men, although some do not deserve such leniency."

In the passage which follows a message of encouragement is sent to those who are despondent about their sins.

Mandate XII. vi. : (1) " But I, the angel of repentance, say unto you, ' Fear not the devil ; for I was sent,' saith he, ' to be with you who repent from your whole heart, and to strengthen you in the faith.' (2) Believe, therefore, on God, ye who by reason of your sins have despaired of your life ; for if ye turn to the Lord with your whole heart and serve Him according to His will, He will give healing to your former sins, and ye shall have power to master the works of the devil."

Parable the seventh : (4) " ' But behold, Sir,' say I, ' they have repented with their whole heart.' ' I am quite aware

myself,' saith he, 'that they have repented with their whole heart; well, thinkest thou that the sins of those who repent are forgiven forthwith? Certainly not; but the person who repents must torture his own soul, and must be thoroughly humble in his every action, and be afflicted with all the divers kinds of affliction; and if he endure the afflictions which come upon him, assuredly He Who created all things and endowed them with power will be moved with compassion and will bestow some remedy. And this (will God do), if in any way He perceive the heart of the penitent pure from every evil thing. But it is expedient for thee and for thy house that thou shouldest be afflicted now.' "

Justin Martyr, in his Apology (I. 66), shows how carefully the Eucharist was guarded in his day, and hints at the existence of some means of keeping from participation of it not only the unbaptized but also those who had lapsed :—

" This food is called by us the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake but he who believes that the things which are taught by us are true, and has been washed in the laver which is for remission of sins and unto regeneration, and who lives as Christ has directed."

And again, Dial. cum Tryphone, chapter cxli. : " But if even to such a man (David) no remission was granted before repentance, and only when this great king, and anointed one, and prophet, mourned and conducted himself so, how can the impure and utterly abandoned, if they do not weep and mourn and repent, hope that the Lord will not impute sin unto them? "

That the penitential discipline of the Early Church was always administered with due strictness may be doubted in view of what Irenæus says of Cerdon the heretic. Lenience may have been shown in this particular case owing to the fact that it was false doctrine rather than evil-living which was the cause of offence.

" Valentinus came to Rome in Hyginus' time; he flourished under Pius, and continued to Anicetus. And Cerdon, who was before Marcion, also came in the time of Hyginus, who was the ninth bishop. He came into the Church and made public confession, and so continued, at

one time teaching secretly, at another time again making public confession, at another time being rebuked for his evil doctrines and being separated from the assembly of the brethren."

Here we have three stages indefinitely repeated, first the secret teaching of heresy, then the public rebuke for heresy, then the public confession in the body of the Church, with restoration to communion, and then the vicious circle recommences. It is all very understandable on both sides. The heretic wavers between orthodoxy and heresy, alternately feeling awe and contempt for the authority of the Church ; the Church is anxious to give the man not one repentance but many, feeling that he was after all earnest and good-living. Indeed, this treatment may have prompted Hermas to insist on a tighter discipline.

To his followers, however, the Church was not inclined to be so lenient :

" It was necessary to prove conclusively that those who are of the sect of Valentinus are sprung from such mothers and fathers and ancestors, even as their opinions and rules show ; and also to bring out into the open their own tenets, in the hope that some of them may do penance and return to the one and only creator, and God the Maker of the universe, and may be able to be saved."

That these words are not too strong is shown by the following extract from Irenæus relating to the doings of the Valentinian teacher Marcus :—

" And that love-potions and charms with a view to insulting their persons are employed by this Marcus against some, if not all, of these women, they themselves, when they return to the Church, which frequently happens, have acknowledged. And they confess that they were corrupted by him and loved him with an insane passion. And, moreover, one of our deacons, an Asiatic, received him into his house, and fell into the following misfortune. His wife was very beautiful and was corrupted both in mind and body by this magician, and followed him about for a long time. At last the brethren with much difficulty converted her, but she continued the whole of the rest of her life in the status of a penitent, mourning and bewailing the corruption which had befallen her through this sorcerer " (I. xiii. 5).

From this passage it appears that the door of repentance was open once at any rate to the most grievous sinners. It does not seem that the deacon's wife was excommunicated for life. It may have been so. Possibly as the wife of a deacon some severer discipline was felt to be necessary for her. Or, on the other hand, a sense of shame may have made her unwilling to return to full communion with the Church at the end of the appointed time. The following passage from the same author deals with the same subject :—

" By such words and deeds as these, even in our own district of the Rhone, they have deceived many women, who have their conscience seared with a hot iron. Some of them make a public confession of their sins ; but others, ashamed to do this, and, so to say, calmly despairing of the life of God, have some of them entirely apostatized, while others are in two minds " (I. xiii. 7).

The following passage from Epiphanius seems to raise more difficulties than it solves, and there are difficulties about accepting it *in toto*. But it may be transcribed for what it is worth.

" For the first part of his life, indeed, he practised chastity ; for he lived in solitude, and was the son of a bishop of our Holy Catholic Church. But as time went on he ruined himself with a certain virgin, and having deceived the virgin, destroyed the hope (of salvation) both for her and for himself ; and having corrupted her he was expelled from the Church by his own father. For his father was conspicuous for his intense piety and his zealous loyalty to truth, and unremitting in the performance of his episcopal duties. Marcion, indeed, made incessant supplication, but his request for (an opportunity for) repentance was refused by his own father. For the worthy old bishop took it very hardly that not only had his son fallen, but that he was bringing reproach on himself. So when owing to his flattery he failed to get what he asked for, he escaped from the same city, not enduring the scorn of the majority, and went to Rome itself after the death of Hyginus, the bishop of Rome." So far the account is plausible enough. The remaining words involve considerable difficulty. "And he approached the elders who were still surviving, and formed a link with the pupils of the apostles, and begged to be received by them, and no one would have any dealings

with him ; for the future being puffed up with envy because he did not receive the headship and entrance to the Church he took counsel with himself and deserted to the sect of the deceiver Cerdon" (Epiph., Hacr., XLII. 1).

Salmon, in the "Dictionary of Christian Biography," writes as follows :—

"Epiphanius tells us that Marcion having in spite of frequent entreaties failed to obtain absolution from his indignant father, went to Rome, where he arrived after the death of Hyginus, that he begged restoration from the presbyters there, but that they declared themselves unable to act in the matter contrary to the decision of his venerated father. The mention of presbyters was at that time the ruling power at the Church of Rome, and their professed inability to reverse the decision of a provincial bishop, indicate a date earlier than that of Epiphanius ; but Epiphanius further states that Marcion's quarrel with the presbyters was not only because they did not restore him to Church communion, but also because they did not make him bishop. This has generally been understood to mean Bishop of Rome, and possibly Epiphanius intended this, but he does not say so. His words are, *ὡς οὐκ ἀπείληφε τὴν προεδρίαν τε, καὶ τήν εἴσδυσιν τῆς ἐκκλησίας.* It is absurd on the face of it that an excommunicated foreigner should dream of being made bishop of a Church from which he was asking in vain for absolution. We must then believe that Epiphanius misunderstood some expression which he found in his authority, or else that Marcion had been already a bishop (possibly one of his father's suffragans), had been deposed, and was seeking at Rome at once restoration to communion and recognition of his episcopal dignity. The only authority who directly countenances the latter view is Optatus, who speaks of Marcion (iv. 5, p. 74) as 'ex episcopo factus apostata.' But there is some indirect confirmation in the fact which we learn from Adamatinus (i. 15 ; xvi. 264, Lommatz) that Marcion was afterwards recognized as bishop by his own followers, and was the head of a succession of Marcionite bishops continuing down to the writer's own day. The Marcionites appear to have had no difference with the orthodox as to the forms of Church organization. Tertullian's words are well known, 'faciunt et favos vespae

faciunt et ecclesias Marcionitæ' (Adv. Marcion, iv. 5). We may conclude that episcopacy was the settled constitution of the Church before the time of the Marcionite schism, else Marcion would not have adopted it in his new sect, and it seems more likely that Marcion had been consecrated to the office before the schism than that he had obtained consecration afterwards, or that by his own sole authority he took the office to himself and appointed others to it, a thing unexampled in the history of the Church, of which we should surely have heard if Marcion had done it. Many critics have believed that the statement as to the cause of Marcion's excommunication took its origin from the misunderstanding of a common figurative expression, and that what was originally meant was that Marcion by heresy had corrupted the pure virgin Church. We are inclined to adopt this view, not on account of the confessed austerity of Marcion's subsequent life and doctrines, which are not inconsistent with his having fallen into the sins of the flesh in his youth, but because the story goes on to tell of Scripture difficulties propounded by Marcion to the Roman presbyters, and of his rejection of their solutions. If the question at issue had been whether pardon were to be given for an offence against morality, it is not likely that either party would have chosen to enter into theological controversy, whereas such discussion would naturally arise if the cause of excommunication had been heresy. And that the charge of youthful incontinence is never brought against Marcion by Irenæus or Tertullian."

It may be that προεδρία and εἴσδυσις here have their classical meanings. In that case the meaning is that the presbyters refused to allow Marcion either to take his seat among themselves or to enter the building. It certainly solves the difficulty of Marcion's utterly impossible desire for the episcopate of Rome.

CHAPTER V

TERTULLIAN AND ORIGEN

SO far the Church exercised her discipline with sufficient sternness to satisfy all her members. At least, if they were not satisfied, they did not think it worth while to create a schism on the matter. The rise of Montanism must coincide with a laxer view of Church discipline, and we find traces of it. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, addressed a letter about the year 173 to certain churches in Asia Minor, recommending the restoration to the Church of persons who had fallen into any sin and desired reconciliation. The letter is quoted by Eusebius, H. E., iv. 23 :—

" And in the epistle which he wrote to the Church of Amastris, together with the other churches in Pontus, he mentions Bacchylides and Elpistus, as being the persons that incited him to write : he annexes likewise several expositions of Holy Scripture, and by name mentions Palma their bishop. He recommends to them many things concerning marriage and chastity, and commands those that recover from any lapse whatsoever, whether vice or heretical error, to be received on their conversion."

This rather implies that sterner measures were being used, and that persons were being refused reconciliation to the Church who, in earlier days, would have received it. It is significant that Eusebius gives the date 173 for the rise of Montanism, and Epiphanius 157. It is not necessary to trace the rise and growth of Montanism. All that we are concerned with is their views on Church discipline, for which Tertullian is our authority. In view of their strictness with regard to second marriages, the continuation of Eusebius' remarks demands notice.

" In the same volume is another Epistle to the Cnossians, wherein he admonishes Pinytus, the bishop of the church,

not to impose the heavy yoke of continency upon the brethren, as if it were necessary, but to have regard to the infirmity of most men."

Pinytus may not have been a Montanist at all; indeed, M. Batiffol considers that he was an Encratite. Certainly Montanism was known at Rome in 177, for Irenæus was bidden to negotiate on the matter (Eus., H. E., v. 3). The Montanists having been excommunicated in the East appealed to Rome. According to Tertullian, the bishop of Rome (either Victor or Eleutherius) had been inclined to support Montanus against the Asiatic bishops, while by the time of Zephyrinus the new sect had been condemned. Tertullian, therefore, accuses the Roman Church of tergiversation in the matter (adv. Prax. i.).

"He (Praxeas) was the first to import into Rome from Asia this kind of heretical wickedness. . . . For when the Bishop of Rome had acknowledged the prophetical gifts of Montanus, Priscilla, and Maximilla, and in consequence had given peace to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, he (Praxeas) by importunately urging false accusations against the prophets themselves and their churches, and insisting on the authority of the Bishop's predecessors in the See, forced him to recall the letter of peace which he had written, and to desist from his intention of acknowledging these gifts. So Praxeas did a twofold service to the devil at Rome. He expelled prophecy and brought in heresy: he banished the Paraclete and crucified the Father."

The real truth about Callistus can never be known. He succeeded Zephyrinus in 218, and according to Eusebius was killed in some riot in 223. Tertullian writes of him (de Pudic., i. 21):—

"I hear that an edict has been issued, and a peremptory one too. Forsooth the Pontifex Maximus, that is, bishop of all the bishops, has announced, 'I remit, after penance has been performed, sins of adultery and fornication.'"

If this testimony is reliable, it means that the more liberal policy of Zephyrinus was continued by his successor. But we owe most of our knowledge of Callistus to the Philosophoumena of Hippolytus, a bitter and disappointed rival.

"At that time Zephyrinus imagines that he administers the affairs of the Church, an uninformed and shamefully

corrupt man. . . . He had Callistus as his adviser, and a fellow-champion of these wicked tenets. But the life of this man (Callistus) and the heresy invented by him, I shall after a little explain. The school of these men, during the succession of these pontiffs, continued to acquire strength and augmentation from the fact that Zephyrinus and Callistus helped them to prevail. Never at any time, however, have we been guilty of collusion with them ; but we have frequently offered them opposition, and have refuted them, and have forced them reluctantly to acknowledge the truth. And they, abashed and constrained by the truth, have confessed (their errors) for a short period, but after a little wallow again in the same mire" (Philos., bk. iv., chap. 2).

" Callistus attempted to confirm this heresy (Noetianism), a man cunning in wickedness, and subtle where deceit was concerned, who was compelled by restless ambition to mount the episcopal throne " (chap. 6).

" And Callistus, who was in the habit of always associating with Zephyrinus, and, as I have previously stated, of paying him hypocritical service . . . after the death of Zephyrinus, supposing he had obtained (the position) after which he had so eagerly sought, excommunicated Sabellius, as not entertaining orthodox opinions. He acted thus from apprehension of me. . . ."

A description of Callistus' heresy follows, and Hippolytus sums it up thus :—

" He is not abashed at being at one time betrayed into the tenet of Sabellius, whereas at another time he is betrayed into the doctrine of Theodotus."

But it is his lax views on discipline that chiefly perturbed Hippolytus. His complaints are as follows :—

I. That he relaxes ecclesiastical discipline.

" The impostor, having ventured on such opinions, established a school in antagonism to the Church . . . and he first invented the device of conniving with men in regard to their indulgence in (sensual) pleasures, saying that all their sins had been forgiven by himself. For he who is in the habit of attending the congregation of anyone else and is called a Christian, should he commit any transgression, the sin, they say, is not reckoned unto him, provided only he hurries off to the school of Callistus. And many persons

were gratified with his regulation, as being stricken in conscience, and at the same time having been rejected by numerous sects ; while some of them also, in accordance with our condemnatory sentence, had been forcibly ejected from the Church."

II. That he relaxed the terms of admission to Holy Orders.

" He propounded the opinion that, if a bishop was guilty of any sin, if even a sin unto death (1 John v. 16), he ought not to be deposed. About the time of this man, bishops, priests, and deacons who had been twice married and thrice married, began to be allowed to retain their place among the clergy. If, however, anyone who is in Holy Orders should get married, he permitted him to continue in Holy Orders as if he had not sinned. And he alleges that what has been spoken by the apostle has been declared in reference to this person : ' Who art thou that judgest another man's servant ? ' (Rom. xiv. 4). And he asserted that likewise the parable of the tares is uttered in reference to this person : ' Let the tares grow along with the wheat ' (Matt. xiii. 30) ; or, in other words, let those who in the Church are guilty of sin remain in it. But also he affirmed that the ark of Noah was made for a symbol of the Church, in which were both dogs and wolves and ravens, and all things clean and unclean ; and so he alleges that the case should stand in like manner in the Church."

III. That he relaxed marriage laws, in a passage which is corrupt. It seems that he permitted cohabitation without matrimony.

IV. Lastly, he introduced second baptism.

" During the pontificate of this man, for the first time second baptism was presumptuously attempted by them."

This is all that Hippolytus says. One can only surmise that in lieu of penance baptism was repeated, and the policy certainly harmonizes with the other three practices mentioned. Finally, Hippolytus remarks :—

" These then are (the practices and opinions) which that most astonishing Callistus established, whose school continues, preserving its customs and traditions, not discerning

with whom they ought to communicate, but offering communion to all indiscriminately."

What are we to make of all this? If only we could be sure that the epistles of Callistus included in the "False decretals" were genuine, we should be nearer understanding the problem. Callistus writes from the standpoint of the ordinary catholic, in respect of marriage, clerical sin, and penance generally. Anyone reading these letters and then turning to the passages of Hippolytus cited above, will see that the latter are a parodied perversion of the former, save that the single sentence about second baptisms has no counterpart in Callistus. Were there two popes in the earliest years of the third century; or was Hippolytus right in averring that Callistus utterly neglected discipline; or was Hippolytus a Montanist in his views about discipline, and Callistus a follower of Zephyrinus' policy?

But our chief information about Montanism is contained in the writings of Tertullian (*circa* 160–240), who may be styled the first Puritan. At first he was content that the discipline of the Church was being administered with adequate strictness.

"There also (in public assembly) exhortations are made, rebukes and the holy censures are administered. For sentence is passed with great gravity, as befits those who are sensible of the presence of God. And you have the most notable instance of an anticipation of the judgment to come (*summumque futuri iudicii præiudicium*) when anyone has sinned so grievously that he is severed from all communion, both in prayer and general assembly and all holy intercourse" (Apol., 39). How was it that his views changed so completely?

There was always latent in Tertullian something of that impatience of which he accuses himself (De Patientia, i.). His fervently idealistic temperament bitterly resented lowered standards, compromises, half-way houses, accommodations of all kinds. He was always something of a Montanist. No doubt he had reason to complain of half-hearted Christianity. The treatises "De Poenitentia," and "De Culta Feminarum," in his pre-Montanist days, as well as the Montanist "De Fuga in Persecutione" and "De Virginibus Velandis," describe the half-hearted worldly Christian of his and any other time. As he himself admits, he would

have been a Montanist had there been no Montanism (De Jejuniis, xii.). There is something of the Puritan in his stern single-hearted loyalty to certain deep, if narrow, convictions; something of the Quaker in his opposition to the soldier's profession (De Idololatria, xix.), and his sense of the fact that Christians are to be a peculiar people.

His "De Poenitentia" represents his pre-Montanist views of Church Discipline. It is primarily connected with baptism. "If any were to understand the mighty import of baptism they would fear to receive it more than to postpone it" (De Baptismo, xviii.). Repentance is ordained of God (De Poen., chap. 2), and avails for all sins. "To all sins, then, committed whether by flesh or spirit, whether by deed or will, God . . . has engaged to give pardon through penitence" (chap. 4). But such penitence, if genuine, is never followed by a repetition of the sin. "Repentance is the price at which God values the pardon He bestows. . . . If then sellers first examine the coin with which they make their bargains, to see whether it is cut, clipped, or of base metal, we believe in the same way that the Lord, when He is about to make us the grant of such valuable commodity, namely, eternal life, first proves our repentance." How careful, therefore, must be the preparation for the sacrament of Baptism, "not that I deny that the remission of sins is perfectly assured to such as are on the point of entering the water; but what we have to labour for is, that we may be allowed to attain to that blessing." "We are not washed in order that we may cease to sin, but because we have ceased, since in heart we have been bathed already" (chap. 6).

But there is a second repentance for those who have been baptized, though he is somewhat chary of mentioning it lest the promise of a second repentance should lead to a second sin. Shipwrecked men become landsmen: they do not dare again to hope for God's deliverance; "I praise their fear: I love their reverence." But God knows man's weakness, and "although the gate of forgiveness has been bolted and fastened with the bar of baptism yet still He allows it to stand ajar. In the porch He has set a second repentance to open to those who knock, but now once for all and never again, because the last time it was in vain.

Is not even this ' once ' enough ? You have now what you do not deserve, because you had lost what you received. If the Lord's pity grants you the means of recovering what you had lost, be thankful for a mercy not only received but increased, for to restore is a greater thing than to give, in so far as to have lost is worse than never to have received. However, if a man should incur the debt of a second repentance, let not his mind be cast down at once and overwhelmed with despair. By all means let it be grievous to sin again, but not to repent again : grievous to imperil oneself again, but not grievous to be made free " (chap. 7). God's willingness to forgive again is proved from the parables (chap. 8).

The remainder of the treatise deals with the steps to be taken towards the second repentance. It is not to be an affair of the conscience only : it must be exhibited in action. Exhomologesis, or confession to the Lord, is the parent of repentance whereby God is appeased. It is a " discipline for man's humiliation," involving sackcloth, ashes, mourning, fasting, prayer, prostration before the feet of the presbyter and saints, and petitions to them for their prayers. " While it (exhomologesis) abases the man, it raises him ; while it covers him with filth, it renders him cleaner ; while it accuses, it excuses ; while it condemns, it absolves. The less you spare yourself, the more God will spare you " (chap. 9). But men shrink from the humiliation of it all. Yet men would not do so if they reflected that sin against Christ is sin against His Body, the Church. " But among brethren and fellow-servants, where there is common hope, fear, joy, sorrow, suffering, because there is a common Spirit from a common Lord and Father, why do you think they are different from yourself ? Why do you shun the fellow-sufferers with your own mishaps, as if they would mock and jeer at them ? The body cannot rejoice at the trouble of any one member ; of necessity it must sympathize with the grief and labour for the cure. In the company of two (in uno et altero) is the Church ; but the Church is Christ. So when you prostrate yourself at the brethren's knees it is Christ you handle, Christ you supplicate. So for when they shed tears over you it is Christ Who suffers, Christ who pleads for mercy to the Father. What a son (or the Son) asks for is easily obtained. . . . ' It is a miser-

able thing to come to exhomologesis ? ' True, for evil does lead to misery ; but where penance is to be done the misery ends because it becomes health-giving " (chap. 10). There follows a passage of true Tertullian irony against penitent fops and dandies (chap. 11), and finally (chap. 12) the sinner is begged to undergo whatever humiliation may be needful to regain his lost status. " Since you know that after the first outworks of the Lord's baptism there still remains for you, in exhomologesis, a second reserve of help against hell, why do you neglect your own salvation ? . . . Shall the sinner, knowing that exhomologesis has been instituted by the Lord for his restoration, neglect that which restored the King of Babylon to his realm ? " In the last paragraph he repeats a simile that he had used in chapter 4 : " That repentance, O sinner like myself, hasten to embrace as a shipwrecked man clutches at a plank." " What more should I add as regards those two planks (as it were) of human salvation ? "

So much for Tertullian the Catholic. In his " De Pudicitia " he inveighs against any possible repentance for sins against modesty.

" The Pontifex Maximus, the bishop of bishops, has announced, ' I remit after penance has been performed, sins of adultery and fornication.' O edict, on which cannot be inscribed, ' Good deed ' ! . . . But this is read in the Church, it is pronounced in the Church, and the Church is a Virgin ! Far, far from the betrothed of Christ be such an announcement ! " (De Pudic., i.). Tertullian then proceeds to argue against the validity of such an absolution. He takes up two standpoints. He urges that the Church, or Callistus, has no authority to forgive sins, and that in any case such a sin cannot be forgiven. To take the second line of thought first, we find Tertullian arguing that God is not only merciful but just (chap. ii.) ; that adultery is forbidden in the decalogue (chap. v.) ; that the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin refer to heathen, as is evident by their context (chap. vii.) ; that the parable of the prodigal son cannot be urged in support (chap. viii.). The difficulty of the incestuous Corinthian is avoided by a refusal to identify the person forgiven in 2 Corinthians ii. 5–11 with the sinner of 1 Corinthians v. " What reference is understood here to the fornicator ? What to the contaminator

of his father's bed ? What to the Christian who had overstepped the shamelessness of heathen ?—since, of course, he would have absolved by a special pardon one whom he had condemned by a special anger " (chap. xiii. ff.). The whole of the New Testament is taken to prove that for such sins there can be no repentance.

The second line of attack denies the Church's power to forgive. " ' If,' say they, ' there is a repentance that lacks pardon, it immediately follows that such repentance must be wholly unpractised by you. For nothing is to be done in vain. Now repentance will be practised in vain, if it is without pardon. But all repentance is to be practised. Therefore let us allow that *all* repentance wins pardon, that it may not be practised in vain ; because it ought not to be practised, if it is practised in vain.' Justly, then, do they urge this argument against us. Since they have usurped and kept in their own power the fruit of this, as of other, repentance, namely, forgiveness ; for so far as *they* are concerned, at whose hands repentance wins *man's* peace, it is vain. But as regards us, who remember that the Lord alone pardons sins (and, of course, the mortal ones), it will not be practised in vain. For the repentance being referred back to the Lord, and thenceforth lying prostrate before Him, will on this account all the more obtain pardon, that it begs it from God alone, and it does not believe that *man's* peace is sufficient for its guilt, because so far as the Church is concerned, it prefers to feel the blush of shame rather than the joy of communion. It stands before her doors, and warns others by the example of its stigma, and also invokes the tears of the brethren, and returns with a far greater booty, not communion, but compassion. And if it reaps not peace here, it sows it with the Lord ; it does not lose its fruit, but prepares it " (chap. iii.). He reverts to the same line of thought in chapter xxi. : " For who remitteth sins but God alone ? And, of course, mortal sin, committed against Himself and His temple (i.e. the human body). For as far as you are concerned, those who have committed a wrong against you, you are commanded, in the person of Peter, to forgive seventy times seven. And so, even if it were allowed that the blessed apostles had granted someone such an indulgence, the pardon of which is from God, not from man, it would be competent for them to have done so,

not in the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, but of personal power. For they raised the dead, which only God can do ; and they healed the sick, which no one could do but Christ : nay, they even inflicted plagues, which Christ refused to do. ' For it was not seemly that He who came to suffer should be severe.' Ananias and Elymas were smitten, Ananias with death, Elymas with blindness, that by this very fact it might be proved that Christ had the power of doing even things like these. So, too, the prophets granted to the repentant pardon for the sins of murder and adultery, because they gave proofs of severe discipline too. Show me, now, apostolic successor (apostolic and prophetic evidences), that I may acknowledge your divine authority, and vindicate to yourself the power of remitting such sins ! If, however, you have only received the functions of discipline, and the duty of presiding not imperially but ministerially (*nec imperio præsidere, sed ministerio*), who or how great are you to grant indulgence, since by showing neither the prophetic nor the apostolic character, you lack that virtue whose property it is to grant indulgence ? " It was not that Callistus had forgiven a sin that hurt Tertullian : it was that he had forgiven an irremissible sin. At the end of chapter xviii. he writes, referring to St. Paul's statement, that he obtained mercy, because he acted ignorantly and in unbelief : " So that clemency of God, Who prefers the sinner's repentance to his death, looks to men who are ignorant still and unbelieving still, to liberate whom Christ came, but it does not look to those who know God already and have learned the sacrament of the faith. But if the mercy of God applies to such as are still ignorant and unbelieving, naturally penitence invites mercy to itself ; without prejudice to that kind of penitence *after* believing, which either in the case of lighter sins will be able to win pardon from the bishop, or in the case of greater and irremissible sins, from God alone." He will not deny the right of the Church to forgive sins. " But the *Church* has the power to forgive sins, you will say. This I acknowledge more than you, since I have the Paraclete Himself speaking in the new prophets thus : ' The Church has the power to forgive sins, but I will not do it, lest they commit other sins.' . . . I will now enquire into your opinion to discover by what right you usurp to yourself this power which

belongs to the Church. If because the Lord said to Peter, 'On this rock will I build my Church,' 'I have given thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' or 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind or loose on earth shall be bound or loosed in heaven,' then you presume that the power of binding and loosing has come down to you, that is to every church akin to Peter (*Petri propinquam*), who are you subverting and changing the manifest intention of the Lord to convey this to Peter personally? 'On *thee*,' He says, 'I will build my Church,' and 'I will give the keys to *thee*, not to the Church' . . . 'whatsoever thou shalt have loosed or bound,' not, 'what they shall have loosed or bound.'" All this, of course, neglects the passage in John xx. The real difficulty in Tertullian's mind was not "Can the Church forgive sins?" but "What is the Church, which has this power?" "What now has all this to do with the Church, and *your* Church indeed?" For following the person of Peter that power will belong to spiritual men, to an apostle or a prophet. For the Church is, properly and principally, the Spirit Himself, in Whom is the Trinity of one Divinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He binds together the Church which the Lord has founded on the three (*quam Dominus in tribus posuit*). And thus, from that time forward, every number of persons who have combined together into this faith is accounted "a Church" by its Author and Consecrator. And so the Church will forgive sins. But it will be the Church of the Spirit speaking through a spiritual man, not the Church which consists of a number of bishops. For the right and the decision is the Lord's, not the servant's; is God's, not the priest's (chap. xxi.).

Clement of Alexandria (*nat.* 150–160) does not differ essentially from the views of Tertullian the Catholic. "He, then, who has received the forgiveness of sins ought not to sin any more, for in addition to the first and only repentance from sins (this would be the repentance from former sins in the first and heathen state of life, I mean the life of ignorance) there is forthwith appointed for those who have been called a repentance that cleanses the place of the soul from transgressions, that faith may be established. And the Lord knowing the heart, and foreseeing the future, foreknew both the fickleness of man and the craft and subtlety of the devil from the first, from the beginning;

how he would give the servant of God certain occasions of sins, envying man for the remission of sins; skilfully plotting that they might share his fall. So being very merciful He has vouchsafed another, a second repentance, in the case of those who, though in faith, fall into any sin; so that should any one be tempted after he is called, and overcome by force or fraud, he may still receive a repentance not to be repented of. 'For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries' (Heb. x. 26, 27). But continual and successive repentings for sins differ nothing from the case of those who have never once believed, except that they (i.e. the heathen) are not conscious that they sin. I do not know which is worse, the man who sins deliberately, or the man who repents of his sins and transgresses again. . . . He who from among the heathen and from his old life has resorted to faith has received forgiveness of sins once. But he who has sinned after this, on his repentance, though he receives absolution, ought to fear, as no longer washed unto the forgiveness of sin. . . . For frequent repentance and readiness to change easily from want of training, is the practice of sin again. The frequent begging for forgiveness for our frequent transgressions is a mere semblance of repentance, not repentance itself" (Strom. ii. 13).

"But it is He, the Word Who is Judge, punishing us; of Whom Isaiah saith, 'The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all,' making Him the corrector and healer of our sins. Therefore He alone can forgive offences, appointed our Pedagogue by the Father of all, and He alone can distinguish between obedience and disobedience." (*Ib.* ii. chap. 8).

"If a man through ignorance or some involuntary mischance after his sealing and ransom (from sin) falls into sins or transgressions so as to be wholly carried away by them, he is altogether rejected by God. For to every man who turns sincerely and with his whole heart to God the gates are opened and the Father gladly receives the son who truly repents. But true penitence is no longer to be liable to the same sins, but utterly to pluck them from the soul." "Quis dives salvetur?" § 39.

Origen (*circa* 185–250) contra Celsum, iii. chap. 51, describes the discipline of the Church in his time :—

" The Christians, however, having previously, as far as possible, tested the souls of those who wish to become their hearers, and having previously instructed them in private when the hearers seem to have sufficiently evinced a desire to lead a good life before entering the community, then introduce them, privately forming one class of those who are beginners and are receiving admission, but who have not yet received the sign of complete purification ; and another class of those who have shown to the best of their power their intention to desire no other things than are approved by Christians ; and among these there are certain persons appointed to make enquiries regarding the lives and behaviour of those who join them, in order that they may prevent those who commit acts of infamy from coming into their common assembly, receiving with their whole heart those of a different character, that they may make them better."

Here we find for the first time evidence of two classes (*τάγματα*) of catechumens, a higher and a lower.

Origen continues :—

" Such is their method of procedure with those who sin, and especially those who sin by incontinence, whom they exclude from all communion (*ἀπελαύνουσι τοῦ κοινοῦ*), although according to Celsus they (the faithful) are like those who perform the most shameless tricks in the market-places. Now the venerable institution of Pythagoras set up cenotaphs over those who apostatised from their philosophy, counting them dead ; but the Christians lament as dead, as men lost and dead to God, those who are conquered by lust, or any other enormity. And if they show any marked change, they receive them at some future time as men raised from the dead, though after a longer interval than those who were admitted at the first ; but they do not place in any office or post of rank in the said Church of God those who after professing the Gospel have failed to follow it."

But in his " Exhortatio ad Martyrium " he seems at least to contradict the above :—

" If then a man who breaks treaties made with men is a covenant-breaker and outside the pale of salvation

(*σωτηρίας ἀλλότριος*), what are we to say of those who by denial annul the covenant made with God, and run back again to Satan whom they renounced at their baptism? To them we must say what Eli said to his sons: 'If one man sin against another, pray for him: but if he sin against the Lord, who will pray for him?'" (1 Sam. ii. 25, LXX.).

This is corroborated by what he says of the distinction between sins remissible and irremissible. He writes thus (Hom. in Lev. xv. § 2 [Lev. 25]):—

"'We have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' (2 Cor. v. 1). This then is our house, which none can build save he who fears God. This is the house which none can build, none can inhabit, save in simplicity of mind and purity of heart. But since it often happens that even he who has built well, and constructed for himself a heavenly house by doing well, living well, and believing rightly, incurs the debt of some sin, and is compelled to sell it by a harsh creditor, and transfer his labours to another man, yet the goodness and pity of the lawgiver help him to redeem it within a fixed time. He says, 'In the jubilee he shall return unto his possession' (Lev. xxv. 28). What price? Doubtless the price of penitence, got together with tears, and found with the hands, that is, the labour of good works. . . . So if, as we have expounded above, a man falls into sin he can always recover 'his house,' to speak figuratively; if there be found in us some fault of heart (reading *culpa moralis* for *mortalis*), which consists not in mortal sins, nor in blaspheming the faith, but rather in error of talk or life: this is 'to sell his house.' . . . So this 'sale' and fault of this kind can always be repaired, nor are you ever prevented from doing penance for sins of this kind. But in the case of graver sins opportunity of penance is granted but once: but those common sins (*communia*), which we frequently fall into, always receive penance, and are perpetually being redeemed (*semper poenitentiam recipiunt et sine intermissione redimuntur*)."

On the absolute necessity of confession, Origen writes (Hom. in Num. x. § 1):—

"I will go further and say that unless a man has holy intentions and zeal for holiness, when he sins he does not know how to do penance for his sin, he does not know how to seek a remedy for his fault. Those who are not holy die

in their sins ; those who are holy do penance for their sins, feel their wounds, understand their fall, seek out a priest, beg for health, seek purification through a priest. Therefore, the law designedly and significantly lays down that high priests and priests are to bear the sins not of everyone, but only of the holy ones : for he is holy who cures his sin through the high priest " (cf. also Hom. I. on Ps. 37).

In his commentaries on Matthew, Origen writes as follows (Matt. xvi. 18 . . .) :—

" The gates of Hades shall prevail against him who judges unjustly and does not bind on earth according to the Word of God, nor in accordance with His will looses on earth : but he judges justly against whom the gates of Hades do not prevail. Therefore, he has the keys of the kingdom of heaven, opening to those who were loosed upon earth that they may be loosed and free in heaven also ; and shutting to those who by his just decision were bound upon earth, that they may be bound and condemned in heaven also. But since they who usurp (ἐκδικοῦντες) the bishop's place use this saying as if they were Peter, and had received the keys of the kingdom of heaven from the Saviour, teaching that what they have bound on earth, that is, condemned, is bound also in heaven, and what they have loosed is loosed also in heaven ; it must be asserted that they say so rightly, if they have done that on account of which the saying ' Thou art Peter ' was said to Peter ; and if they are such that Christ builds His Church upon them, then that promise may be rightly held to refer to them. . . . But if he is ' holden with the cords of his sin ' (Prov. v. 22) he binds and looses to no purpose. And possibly you might say, that the bad man is bound in the heavens of wisdom, that is in virtues, and again that the good man is loosed in them, and that the sins that he committed before he was virtuous are remembered no more against him. . . . But if a man who is no Peter, and has not the things which were Peter's when those words were spoken, thinks that like Peter he will bind on earth so that what he binds will be bound also in heaven, . . . he is puffed up, knowing not the sense of the Scriptures, and being puffed up has fallen into the trap of the devil."

Here is a protest against unworthy men giving or with-

holding absolution, reasonable enough when it is remembered that though an unworthy minister cannot invalidate the other Sacraments by his unworthiness, yet he can loose what should not be loosed and bind what should not be bound, not owing to mere error to which all are liable, but to perversion due to sin. The Reformation might never have been if Origen's warning had been remembered. The confessor was given the onerous responsibility of deciding whether a sin ought to be confessed publicly or no. So Origen writes (Hom. II. on Ps. 37) :—

" See then how Holy Scripture teaches us that we ought not to conceal our sin within ourselves. For it may be just as they who have undigested food in their stomachs or some severe gastric oppression are relieved by its removal, likewise all of those who have sinned, if they conceal it and retain the sin within themselves, are sorely oppressed and nearly suffocated by the phlegm of sin. But if a man becomes his own accuser, directly he accuses himself and confesses he vomits up his sin and disperses the whole cause of his malady. Only look around you very carefully and see to whom you ought to confess your sin. First make proof of the physician to see that he is the kind of man to whom you should reveal the cause of your sickness, that he knows how to be weak with the weak, to weep with him that weeps ; that he knows how to temper condolence and compassion with discipline (*qui consolendi et compatiendi noverit disciplinam*) ; that he shows himself to be a skilled and sympathetic physician, so that whatever he says to you, whatever counsel he gives, you can do it and carry it out, as he may understand and realize that your malady is such that it ought to be revealed before the assembly of the whole Church, and healed there, with the result that the others may be edified and you yourself made whole without difficulty, much forethought is necessary, much inward preparation, and the counsel of a thoroughly experienced physician."

Origen, " De Oratione," xxviii., deals with the forgiveness of others. He begins by speaking of all those to whom we are debtors. " Besides all these things which belong to all mankind, there is the debt we owe to the widow of whom the Church takes care ; and another debt to the deacon, and another to the presbyter, and the greatest debt of all

is owed to the bishop, demanded by the Saviour of the whole Church, and if unpaid, He will punish." . . . For we should forgive those who profess penitence for wrongs done to us, though they have frequently become our debtors for such wrongs. For He says (Luke xvii. 4): "If thy brother sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times return to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." But towards those who repent not we should not be hard, but such men are sinners against themselves. . . . For we have all of us authority to forgive sins committed against ourselves, as is plain from these words, 'As we forgive our debtors,'" and again: "If we also forgive everyone who is our debtor. But he upon whom Jesus has breathed as He breathed upon the apostles, and can be known, by his fruits, to have received the Holy Spirit and to be spiritual by the fact that he is led by the Spirit, even as was the Son of God, to do every work according to reason (ἐφ' ἕκαστον τῶν κατὰ λόγον πρακτέων)—he forgives whatsoever God forgives, and retains sins that are past remedy; ministering (even as the prophet ministered unto the Lord, saying not their own words but such as the Divine Will bade them) unto God Who alone has power to forgive." Origen then quotes John xx. 23, suggesting that someone might blame the apostles for not remitting all sin to every man, and shows how in the law priests were not allowed to offer sacrifice for certain sins. "And never will a priest who has power of remitting certain involuntary offences or of making an offering for sin offer a whole burnt offering for adultery, deliberate homicide, or any other grave crime or sin. So, too, the apostles and those who are like the apostles being priests after the likeness of the great High Priest, instructed in the art of divine healing and taught by the Spirit, know for what sins, and when and how they should offer sacrifice, and for who they ought not to offer it they also know. . . . Some there are who, I know not how, arrogate to themselves dignity beyond that of priesthood, though perchance not themselves expert in priestly science, and boast that they can pardon even idolatry and adultery and fornication, as if by their prayer for those who dare to do such sins they could loose a sin that is unto death."

Origen deals with the subject in his commentary on

Leviticus (ii.). He mentions seven means whereby we can attain to forgiveness under the Gospel :—

(i) " Among us there is but one forgiveness of sin, which is granted at the outset in baptism. After this there is no pity for the sinner, nor is any forgiveness granted. It is but fitting that the Christian for whom Christ died should be under a sterner discipline. For them (Israelites) sheep, goats, oxen, birds were killed : for thee the Son of God was killed : canst thou delight to sin again ? But lest this should not encourage thy heart to virtue but rather cast it down to despair, hear now what are the means of forgiveness in the Gospels. Firstly, there is that when we are baptized unto the remission of sins.

(ii) The second is the remission of sins when we endure martyrdom.

(iii) The third is that which is given for alms alone. For the Saviour saith, ' Verum tamen date eleemosynam, et ecce omnia munda sunt vobis ' (Luke xi. 41).

(iv) The fourth remission of sins comes to us when we forgive our brethren their trespasses. ' For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you " (Matt. vi. 41).

(v) The fifth remission of sins is when anyone converts a man from the error of his way. For so the Holy Scripture saith : ' He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins ' (James v. 20).

(vi) The sixth remission comes through abundant love, as the Lord Himself saith : ' Verily I say unto you, her sins which are many are forgiven her, for she loved much ' (Luke vii. 17). And the apostle saith : ' For charity covereth a multitude of sins ' (1 Peter iv. 8).

(vii) There is still a seventh, though hard and toilsome, the remission of sins through penance, when the sinner washes his bed with his tears, and his tears are his meat day and night, and when he does not blush to declare his sin to the Lord's priest, and to ask for medicine, following the example of him who said : ' I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin ' (Ps. xxxii. 5). To this refer the words

of the apostle James : ' Let him call for the elders of the Church ; and let them pray over him . . . and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him ' " (James iv. 14, 15).

To these Origen adds an eighth way of pardon in the next homily (§ 4, on Lev. v. 4 *sqq.*) :—

" For sins of all kinds are to be confessed, and whatever we do should be disclosed by us publicly. If we do anything secretly, if we commit any sin in word alone, or secretly in our thoughts, all must be made public, all brought to light. . . . " (Ps. xxxii. 5).

Notice then how the sins confessed merit the sins forgiven. For if we anticipate the devil in his accusation, he will no longer be able to accuse us ; and if we become our own accusers, it is profitable to our salvation ; whereas if we wait till we are accused of the devil, that accusation makes for our punishment : for he will have as his companions in gehenna those whom he has proved to have been his companions in sin."

There are sins which are called sins unto death : whose consequence is that as often as a man commit them, so often does he die. For that there are many deaths of sin the Apostle Paul testifies, saying . . . (2 Cor. i. 10).

But if a man is overtaken in a sin of this kind, let him be warned by God's Word now, fly to the help of penance : that if he has sinned once he may not sin again, or if twice or even thrice overtaken, may not sin yet more. For a just judge has power to moderate penalties, not only in proportion to quality but quantity also.

CHAPTER VI

A.D. 250–300

THE outbreak of the Decian persecution in A.D. 250 marks a new stage in the development of the Penitential Discipline. Coming at the end of a "thirty-years' peace" it found the Church unprepared. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, draws rather a sad picture (De Lapsis, § 6) of the decay of Christian life: covetousness, unspirituality, excess of apparel, etc., false swearing, quarrelling. Even bishops wandered about, deserting their flocks, and engaging in secular business. Persecution made many martyrs, but caused the fall of many as well. The latter were of two kinds, those who had actually sacrificed or burnt incense, and those who had received libelli or certificates to that effect. When the lapsed desired to return to communion Cyprian found himself between two fires. On the one hand there was the strict or Puritan party who refused any readmittance to the lapsed, under the leadership of Novatus, and on the other hand the lax party would insist on the readmission of the lapsed, especially those who had received libelli from martyrs or confessors. Novatus, who afterwards executed a remarkable *volte-face*, and joined Novatian, the Puritan leader at Rome, began as a supporter of easy terms to the lapsed. Cyprian complains (Ep. ix.): "For although in smaller sins sinners may do penance for a set time, and according to the rules of discipline come to public confession (exhomologesis), and by imposition of the hand of the bishop and clergy receive the right of communion: now with their time still unfulfilled while persecution is still raging, while the peace of the Church is not yet restored, they are admitted to communion, and their name is presented; and while the penance is not yet performed, confession not yet made, and the hands of the bishop and clergy are not yet laid upon them, the Eucharist

is given to them, although it is written, ' Whosoever shall eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.' " He writes in the same strain to the confessors and martyrs (Ep. x.) and to the people (Ep. xi.) and to the clergy (Ep. xiii.). To the Church at Rome he writes (Ep. xiv.), stating his practice : " It seemed fit both that honour should be paid to the martyrs, and that the vehemence of those who were anxious to disturb everything should be restrained. . . . I judged it well to stand by your judgment, lest our proceedings, which ought to be united and agreed in all things, should in any respect be different."

Cyprian's own bias was towards leniency (Ep. liv. § 16) : " Our patience, our facility, our humanity are ready for those who come. I entreat all to return into the Church. . . . I remit everything. I shut my eyes to many things, with the desire and the wish to gather together the brotherhood. Even those things which are committed against God I do not investigate with the full judgment of religion. I almost sin myself in remitting sins more than I ought. I embrace with prompt and full love those who return with repentance, confessing their sin with lowly and unaffected atonement." But he had to school himself to administering discipline, in spite of the veneration which the confessors and martyrs who had pled for the restoration of the lapsed necessarily commanded. Cyprian's policy was to wait until the tyranny should be overpast, and then formulate a definite policy. He insists on taking the whole body of the faithful into his confidence. " From the beginning of my episcopate I made up my mind to do nothing on my own private opinion, without your advice (his presbyters and deacons) and the consent of the people. But as soon as, by the grace of God, I shall have come to you, then we will discuss in common those things which either have been or are to be done " (Ep. v.). Similarly, in reply to " all the confessors " who restored the lapsed on their own responsibility, and wrote very abruptly and curtly to say so (Ep. xxiii.), Cyprian writes : " I have read the letter of the whole body of confessors, which they wish to be made known by me to all my colleagues . . . which matter, as it waits for the counsel and judgment of all of us, I do not dare to prejudge, and so to assume a common cause for my own decision."

Indeed, the parties at Carthage were not as one might have been inclined to expect. One might look for a certain sternness among the clergy, a certain laxity among the laity, and a moderating policy from the bishop. The laxity was among the clergy. They refused to reply to his letters (Ep. xii.), and they yielded to the importunities of the martyrs and confessors and still more to the agitation made by a certain section of the laity that these importunities should not be resisted (Ep. xxii. §§ 2 and 3). The sterner policy was approved by the laity: at least it is to them that Cyprian writes as to his supporters (Ep. xi.). But there was no Puritan faction at Carthage like that at Rome under Novatian. At Carthage there was a centre and a right wing; at Rome a centre and a left wing.

In the meantime Cyprian proposes a definite course of action until a Council can be held. The cases of the lapsed are to be held back till the Council. He writes thus to the martyrs and confessors (Ep. xi.), to the clergy (Ep. xix.), to the people (Ep. x.): "Let the lapsed learn from you what they ought to have taught: let them reserve your petitions and wishes for the bishops, and let them wait for ripe and peaceable times to give peace at your request. The first thing is, that the brothers should receive peace from the Lord, and then, in accordance with your wishes, that the peace of her children should be considered" (Ep. xi.). He wrote to this effect to Rome: "When I found that those who had polluted their hands and mouths with sacrilegious contact, or had no less infected their consciences with wicked certificates, were everywhere soliciting the martyrs, and were also corrupting the confessors with importunate and excessive entreaties, so that without any discrimination or examination of the individuals themselves thousands of certificates were daily being given, contrary to the law of the Gospel, I wrote letters in which I recalled by my advice, as much as possible, the martyrs and confessors to the Lord's commands" (Ep. xiv.). Those who were dangerously ill should be readmitted to the Church "with the peace promised them by the martyrs. . . . The cases of the rest, even though they might have received certificates from the martyrs, I ordered altogether to be put off, and to be reserved till I should be present, that so, when the Lord has given to us peace, and several

bishops shall have begun to assemble in one place, we may be able to arrange and reform everything" (Ep. xiv. § 3). Some abatement of persecution took place at the end of 250, and enabled a Council to be held (251). The libellatici who had received certificates from the persecutors were to be examined, and the lapsed were to be granted communion if on their death-beds. Those who had lapsed without sacrificing, i.e. the libellatici, were to be restored on doing penance (Ep. li. § 5, § 14, § 13). The discussion of the lapsed who had sacrificed was deferred. The second Council was held in 252, and its synodical declaration is contained in Ep. liii. "Now . . . under compulsion of necessity, we have decided that peace is to be given to those who have not withdrawn from the Church of the Lord, but have not ceased from the first day of their lapse to repent, and to lament, and to beseech the Lord" (§ 1).

It remains to gather up some of Cyprian's views. He asserts the intimate connection between Matthew xvi. 18, 19 and the Episcopate. Quoting the passage, he continues: "Thence, through the changes of times and successions, the ordering of bishops and the plan of the Church flows onwards; so that the Church is founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by the same rulers" (Ep. xxvi. § 1).

He realizes, as against the Puritan faction, that there may be tares in the Church: as against the party of laxity, he sees the necessity of turning the tares into wheat. "For although there seem to be tares in the Church, yet neither our faith nor our charity ought to be hindered, so that because we see that there are tares in the Church we ourselves should withdraw from the Church: we ought only to labour that they may be wheat, that when the wheat shall begin to be gathered into the Lord's barns, we may receive fruit for our labour and work." The apostle in his epistle says: "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour" (2 Tim. ii. 20; Ep. l. § 3). And again: "What a swelling of arrogance it is, what oblivion of humility and gentleness, what a boasting of his own arrogance, that anyone should either dare or think he is able to do what the Lord did not even grant to the apostles—that he should think that he can discern

the tares from the wheat, or, as if it were granted to him to bear the fan and to purge the threshing-floor, should endeavour to separate the wheat from the chaff ; and since the apostle says : ' But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth,' should think to choose the vessels of gold and silver . . ." etc. (Ep. li. § 25).

Further, he realizes that the promise with regard to binding and loosing, forgiving and retaining, is contingent on the state of mind of the subject. " If, according to what we hear, and desire, and believe of them, they shall stand bravely, and shall overthrow the adversary with us in the encounter, we shall not repent of having granted peace to men so brave ; yea, it is the great honour and glory of our episcopate to have granted peace to martyrs, so that we, as priests, who daily celebrate the sacrifices of God, may prepare offerings and victims for God. But if—which the Lord avert from our brethren—anyone of the lapsed should deceive, seeking peace by guile, and at the time of the impending struggle receiving peace without any purpose of doing battle, he betrays and deceives himself, hiding one thing in his heart and saying another with his voice. . . . We are not able to scrutinize the heart and inspect the mind. Concerning these the Discerner and Searcher of the hidden things judges ; and He will quickly come and judge of the secrets and hidden things of the heart. But the evil ought not to stand in the way of the good, but rather the evil ought to be assisted by the good " (Ep. liii. § 3). And again : " Moreover, we do not prejudge when the Lord is to judge ; save that if He shall find the repentance of the sinners full and sound, He will then ratify what shall have been here determined by us. If, however, anyone should delude us with the pretence of penitence, God, Who is not mocked, and Who looks into man's heart, will judge of those things which we have imperfectly looked into, and the Lord will amend the sentence of His servants " (Ep. li. § 18).

Once more, " De Lapsis," §§ 15, 16, 17, 18 :—

" A new kind of devastation has appeared ; and as if the storm of persecution had urged too little, there has been added, under the title of mercy, a deceiving mischief and a fair-seeming calamity. Contrary to the rigour of

the gospel, contrary to the law of the Lord and God, by the temerity of some, communion is relaxed to heedless persons, a vain and false peace, dangerous to those who grant it, and likely to avail nothing to those who receive it. They do not ask the medicine necessary to health nor the true medicine derived from atonement. . . . Returning from the altars of the devil, they draw near to the holy place of the Lord. . . . All these warnings being scorned and continued—before their sin is expiated, before confession has been made of their crime, before their conscience has been purged by sacrifice and the priest's hand, before the offence of an angry and threatening Lord has been appeased, violence is done to His body and blood. . . . Such a facility does not grant peace, but takes it away; nor does it give communion, but hinders from salvation. There is another persecution, and another temptation, by which the crafty enemy still further assaults the lapsed; attacking them by a secret corruption, that their lamentation may be hushed, their grief be silenced, the memory of their sin pass away. . . . Let no man cheat himself, let no man deceive himself. The Lord alone can have mercy. He alone can bestow pardon for sins committed against Himself, Who bare our sins, Who sorrowed for us, Whom God delivered up for our sins. Man cannot be greater than God, nor can a servant remit or forgo by his indulgence what has been committed by a greater crime against the Lord. . . . The Lord must be besought, the Lord must be appeased by our atonement, Who has said that him that denieth Him will He deny, Who alone has received all judgment from the Father. We believe, indeed, that the merits of martyrs and the works of the righteous are of great avail with the Judge; but that will be when the day of judgment shall come. . . . But if anyone by a precipitate haste rashly thinks that he can give remission of sins to all, or dares to rescind the Lord's precepts, not only does it in no respect benefit the lapsed, but it does them harm. . . . The martyrs order something to be done, but only if this thing be just and lawful, if it can be done without opposing the Lord Himself by God's priest, if the consent of the obeying party be easy and yielding, if the moderation af the ruling party be religious."

In his treatise on the Lord's prayer, § 18, Cyprian writes:

"When, therefore, He says that whoever shall eat of His bread shall live for ever, as it is manifest that those who partake of His Body and receive the Eucharist by the right of communion are living; so, on the other hand, we must fear and pray lest anyone who, being withheld from communion, is separate from Christ's body, should remain at a distance from salvation."

It is, indeed, difficult to believe, from the perusal of the bulk of Cyprian's correspondence, that the chief opposition that he had to face came from the lax school. He writes, as a rule, rather as a bishop would write who was opposed by stern Puritan rigidness, by Novatian rather than by Novatus. It is true that he admits a certain change of opinion in respect to the lapsed. He writes to Antonianus: "I must clear my own person and my own cause in your eyes, lest any should think that I have lightly withdrawn from my purpose, and while at the first I maintained evangelical rigour, yet subsequently I seem to have turned my mind from discipline and from its former severity of judgment, so as to think that those who have stained their consciences with certificates, or have offered abominable sacrifices, are to have peace made easy to them. Both of these things I have done, not without long balanced and pondered reasons" (Ep. li. § 3). He goes on to give these reasons. While the battle was still raging it seemed obvious to make the lapsed realize the enormity of their treachery by calling them to deep penitence. But now that there is a lull they may be given a chance to retrieve their character when the battle is renewed. Further, as some were pressing eagerly for restoration to communion, he told them that the struggle was still raging: they could best do penance by taking their stand in the ranks. He goes on to describe the councils and the policy of the bishops, who endeavoured to steer between the Scylla of permanently excommunicating the lapsed, which might cause them to revert to paganism, and the Charybdis of a rash and hasty restoration, perilous to themselves and antagonistic to the principles of the gospel. In a passage in the same letter (§ 15) he writes with much tenderness of the danger of excessive severity: "If we reject the repentance of those who have some reasonable confidence in their own conscience, they are hurried forthwith at the devil's invitation into heresy or

schism, with the wife and children whom they had kept safe. It will be attributed to us in the day of judgment that we have not cared for the wounded sheep, and that on account of a single wounded one we have lost many sound ones. And whereas the Lord left the ninety and nine that were whole, and sought after the one wandering and weary, and Himself carried it when found upon His shoulders, we not only do not seek the lapsed but even drive them away when they come to us."

In one direction it certainly seems that Cyprian was far too lax. Priests or deacons were merely reduced to the level of laymen. "Trophimus was admitted in such a manner as only to communicate as a layman, not, according to the information given to you by the letters of the malignants, in such a way as to assume the place of a priest" (Ep. li. § 11). And again in the case of presbyters and deacons who had been ordained by a schismatic bishop, they were to be received as laymen. Once more in the letter which he and his colleagues sent to Pomponius with respect to some virgins who cohabited with certain men, including a deacon, though a sound and obvious distinction is made between the degrees of culpability of the women, little is said about the men who were at least as guilty as the women, nor is any distinction made between the deacon and the laymen (Ep. lxi. *passim*, and cf. Achelis, "Virgines subintroductae"). It is not easy to see why a cleric should not be punished on equal terms in the last instance with the layman, and merely reduced to the status of a lay communicant in the first two cases. Bishop Watson of St. David's was excommunicated for life for simony, and not even granted Christian burial (although curiously enough he was buried in the chancel of Wilbraham Church, Cambs.), and in the case of a priest of the Anglican Communion who went over to Rome, and then returned to his obedience, Bishop Paget of Oxford only allowed him at first to attend Holy Communion without communicating: then he might communicate, but still only as a layman; lastly, he was allowed to officiate as a priest. Cyprian confesses that he has no sympathy with the doctrine that all sins are equal (Ep. li. § 16), and therefore one would have expected him to punish the cleric at least as severely as the layman, but while the former is excommunicated for a period, the latter

is merely reduced to the status of the communicating layman.

It remains to gather up briefly the attitude of the Church of Rome towards the Novatian problem. Fabian, bishop of Rome, was an early victim of Decius' brutality, and on his martyrdom the see was left vacant for seventeen months (Jan., 250–June, 251). The Roman clergy began by writing directly to the clergy of Carthage, ignoring Cyprian altogether, but getting a severe snub for their pains (Ep. viii.). The presence of Novatian was sufficient to check any lax treatment of the "lapsi" at Rome, though popular fanaticism had secured this elsewhere. Cyprian's policy was communicated to the Roman clergy who acquiesced in it. Gradually a party of greater strictness arose at Rome, headed by Novatian. While certain confessors, headed by Moyses, were satisfied with Cyprian's policy, Novatian became more and more eager for a more exclusive attitude, though warned by Moyses. The absence of Decius in the Gothic war enabled the Roman clergy to elect as bishop Cornelius, and Novatian, backed by Novatus from Carthage, secured his election as anti-pope. Cornelius writes of him: "This remarkable man desired the episcopate, but kept this ambitious desire to himself and concealed it. . . . Maximus and Urbanus . . . returned to the holy Church, and proclaimed in the presence of many, both bishops and presbyters and a large number of the laity, all his craft and wickedness, which for a long time he had concealed. And this they did with lamentation and repentance, because through the persuasion of the crafty and malicious beast they had left the Church for a time" (Euseb., H. E., vi. 43 § 5).

Cyprian waited to be assured as to the validity of Cornelius' election and consecration (Ep. 45, ii.), and he was satisfied by the report of two African bishops (Ep. 55, vii.). Shortly after Cornelius' consecration a synod was held at Rome of which Eusebius writes (H. E., vi. 43): "A very large synod assembled at Rome of bishops in number 60, and a great many presbyters and deacons; while the pastors of the remaining provinces deliberated in their places privately what ought to be done. A decree was confirmed by all, that Novatus and all who had associated with him, and those who adopted his brother-hating and

inhuman opinion, should be considered by the Church as strangers ; but that they should heal such of the brethren as had fallen into misfortune, and should minister to them with the medicines of penance." The departure of Novatus from Rome and a series of timely letters from Cyprian to the Novatianist confessors on the perils of schism (Ep. 46, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54) weakened the power of Novatianism at Rome, and caused the return, on easy terms, of many of Cornelius' opponents.

To this period belong Dionysius of Alexandria and Gregory Thaumaturgus. There seems good reason for supposing that the eleventh canon is not the work of the latter, but it cannot have been very much later than the other canons.

Dionysius of Alexandra,

born between A.D. 190 and 200, was made Bishop of Alexandria in 247 or 248, where he died 265. The persecution under Decius was preceded by a popular outbreak stirred up by a soothsayer the year before (Euseb., H. E., vi. 41). He administered his diocese from a distance, having, like Cyprian, taken refuge in flight, and defended his action in a letter to one Germanus (Euseb. vi. 40). He was allowed to return to Alexandria in 260, where he died.

Eusebius gives a list of his writings on the question of discipline (Euseb. vi. 46), but unhappily they are for the most part lost. His general outlook on the question may be summed up in his remarks concerning Novatian, quoted by Euseb. vii. 8. He writes to his namesake, afterwards Bishop of Rome :—

" We do right to execrate Novatian who has caused a schism in the Church, and seduced some of the brethren to blasphemy and impiety ; and calumniously accuses our most gracious Lord Jesus Christ as unmerciful."

The same trait comes out in his letter to Fabius, § 10 (Euseb. vi. 42) : " Therefore those blessed martyrs among us (who are now assessors of Christ, partakers of His kingdom, sharers of His judgment, and with Him pronouncing sentence) received certain of the brothers who had lapsed and were convicted of having sacrificed to idols. And seeing their conversion and repentance, and judging that

it might be acceptable to Him Who would not that a sinner should altogether perish, but repent (Ezek. xxxiii. 11), they received them and brought them together again, and restored them (*συνέστησαν*) and had fellowship with them in prayers and eating (*ἑστιασέων*). What advice then do you give us, brethren, concerning them? What ought we to do? Are we to give the same decision and the same sentence as the martyrs? Are we to maintain their indulgence to them, and deal kindly with those on which they had pity? Or are we to reverse their judgment, and constitute ourselves as judges over their sentences, grieving at their leniency, overthrowing the established order (*καὶ τὴν τάξιν ἀνασκευάσωμεν*) and provoking God's wrath?"

He continues (Euseb. vi. 44 § 11), by narrating a story of Serapion, an old man who had lapsed: "He often prayed, but no one heeded him, for he had sacrificed." This implies that the intercession of one of the faithful was necessary as a preliminary to admission to penance (cf. Cyprian, Ep. 53; Tertull., De Pudic. 13). He fell ill, and was communicated by a presbyter, who sent the Host by the old man's grandson. "For I had issued an injunction that those who were at the point of death, if they requested for it, and especially if they had earnestly sought it before, should be absolved, that they might die with good hope."

The following (Migne, Patr. Gr. x., p. 1601) may be an excerpt from the three books of Dionysius, "De Poenitentia" (Jer., De Script., Eccl. cap. 69):—

"But now we are doing the opposite. For we are harshly repelling, when he approaches us, one whom Christ the Good (Shepherd) seeks out when he is wandering on the mountains, calls him back when he flees from Him, and when he is found bears him with difficulty on His shoulders. But let us not consult so wickedly for ourselves, nor thrust the sword into ourselves. For when men set themselves to do harm to others, or contrariwise good, they do not only carry out their full designs on them, but according as they follow wickedness or kindness they will become full either of unbridled passions or divine virtues. And the latter, followers and companions of good angels, both here and there, will fulfil the most blessed destinies to all eternity with all peace and freedom from all ills, and will ever be with God, far the greatest good of all. But the former will

fall away both from the peace of God and from peace with themselves, and here and after death will dwell with the spirit of vengeance. Let us then not thrust away those who repent, but accept them gladly, and number them among those who have not erred, and fill up what is defective in them."

The following extract from one of Dionysius' letters (Pitra Spicilegium Solesmense) to Conon is to the same effect :—

"And those who are near death, if they ask and beseech that they may receive absolution, keeping before their eyes the judgment that they will go to, considering what they will suffer, in chains, condemned and handed over to the tormentor ; but believing that if they were loosed from thence, they would receive remission (ἄνεσιν) and relief from their punishment there, for they are assured that the goodwill (εὐδοκία) of the Lord is true and steadfast : these men a God-fearing love of mankind will send away free. But if after this they survive, it does not seem to me a course worthy to be followed to bind them again and burden them with their sins. For it is most unreasonable to bind again to their sins men who have been once and for all set free and reconciled to God, and openly been made partakers of the divine grace, and sent as free men to the Lord, when they have committed no sin in the interval.

"Shall we then set restrictions on our sentence for God to observe which we would not keep for ourselves ? Shall we proclaim Christ's kindness and withhold our own ? But if after he has recovered any man seems to need more conversion, we take counsel with him that he may willingly humble, abase and afflict himself, while he considers his own profit, the edification of the rest of the brethren, and the taking away of cause of blame for those who are without. If he obeys it will be to his advantage. But if he is disobedient and refuses, then certainly that is a sufficient ground for separating (ἀφορισμόν) him a second time."

Gregory Thaumaturgus,

Archbishop of Neocæsareia, born about 210, died about 270.

Canon I.—" And this applies to captive women defiled by barbarians who outraged their bodies. But if such a person's previous mode of life was condemned as having gone, as it is written, after the eyes of the fornicators, plainly the habit of fornication becomes suspicious in time of captivity also. And people should not readily have communion with such women in prayers " (*κοινωνεῖν τῶν εὐχῶν*).

Canon II.—" Covetousness is a terrible thing ; and it is impossible in one letter to set out the passages of Holy Scripture in which not robbery only is proclaimed as a thing horrible and to be abhorred, but coveting generally and grasping other men's property for gain : all such persons are excommunicated from the Church of God (*ἐκκήρυκτος Ἐκκλησίας Θεοῦ*). But that at the time of the invasion, in such sorrow and lamentation, some should have dared to regard the crisis which brought destruction on all as the opportunity for their private gain, that is a work of impious and God-hated (*θεοστυγῶν*) men, men of unsurpassed iniquity. Therefore it seemed good to excommunicate such persons " (*ἐκκηρύξαι*).

Canon V.—" Therefore we have sent to you Euphrosynus, that in accordance with our custom here he may teach you in like manner against whom you should admit accusations (*ὧν δεῖ τὰς κατηγορίας προσίεσθαι*), and whom you ought to exclude from your prayers " (*ἐκκηρύξαι τῶν εὐχῶν*).

Canon VII.—" Concerning those who have enrolled themselves among the Barbarians, and have dared to do unspeakable things against men of their own race. Those who enrolled themselves among the barbarians, and accompanied them as captives in their invasion, forgetting that they were men of Pontus and Christians, and became so thoroughly barbarian as to put their own race to death by crucifixion (*ξύλῳ*) or strangling, and pointed out roads or houses to the barbarians who did not know them, such men you must not allow even to be hearers (*καὶ τῆς ἀκροασέως*

ἀπεῖρξαι δεῖ) until some decision be arrived at by the saints assembled in council, and by the Holy Spirit before them (καὶ πρὸ αὐτῶν τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι)."

Canon VIII.—" Those who have dared to invade other men's houses, if they have been tried and convicted, ought not to be deemed worthy even of being hearers (μηδὲ τῆς ἀκροασέως ἀξιῶσαι). But if they have accused themselves and made restitution, let them be placed in the ranks of the penitent " (ἐν τῇ τῶν ὑποστρεφόντων τάξει ὑποπίπτειν).

Canon IX.—" Those who have found anything in an open field or in their own houses left behind by the barbarians, if they have been tried and convicted, must be likewise placed among the penitent (ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ὑποπίπτουσι); but if they have accused themselves and made restitution, they may be accounted worthy to join in prayer " (καὶ τῆς εὐχῆς ἀξιῶσαι).

These canons are doubtless genuine. Written about the year 258 to a bishop in Pontus who asked for instruction as to dealing with this kind of sin, they stand in great contrast to the eleventh and last canon. In the first ten we can trace stages: (i) excommunication, either for a period or permanently, and (ii) a state of penance, side by side with the hearers. It seems likely that ἐκκηρύξαι (II), ἐκκηρύξαι τῶν εὐχῶν (III), and οὐ κοινωνεῖν τῶν εὐχῶν (I) are various ways of describing the man who is ἐκκήρυκτος Ἐκκλησίας Θεοῦ, turned out of the Church of God. Such a man for the time being, at the least, is not worthy to be a hearer (VII and VIII). But should he be admitted to penance he takes his place among the penitent, the ὑποστρέφοντες (VIII) or ὑποπίπτοντες (IX). For all practical purposes a Church need only be divided into two parts: one for the faithful and the other for penitents and hearers. The final canon, which seems generally recognized as spurious, may be quoted here in contrast to the other ten. Its style alone would make it suspect, apart from its subject-matter.

Canon XI.—" 'Weeping' takes place outside the gate of the place of prayer; there must the sinner stand and beg for the prayers of the faithful as they enter on his behalf. 'Hearing' takes place within the gate in the porch; there

the sinner must stand until the catechumens go out, and then depart. For it is said, Let him hear the Scriptures and the teaching and be cast out, and not deemed worthy to partake in prayer. 'Submission' consists in standing within the gate of the temple and departing with the catechumens. 'Standing' is standing along with the faithful and not going out with the catechumens, partly the participation in the holy ordinances."

CHAPTER VII

THE FOURTH CENTURY

IT may be as well to review the history of the Penitential Discipline of the Church in the first three centuries before passing on to its fate in the fourth. To men already accustomed to a church with a distinct and strict discipline of its own our Lord gave definite instructions that it was to be administered as the Society which He came to found. We find the process at work in the New Testament and in the sub-apostolic age, though, as one might expect, it has not become stereotyped or systematized. The significant fact which arrests the student's attention is that protests against its administration came from the *strict* parties. Montanism and Novatianism were, or at least imagined themselves to be, movements of reform, attempts to rehabilitate the purer, stricter discipline of the earlier times. No one had protested against discipline as such, or against its excessive use: it was *laxity* that called forth the first two protests. It is true that Montanism concerned itself primarily with matters outside those of discipline, which do not need record here: but as we have seen, it was also a protest against laxly-administered discipline, as were Novatianism and Donatism. Round about the years 200, 250, and 300 arose these three schisms, all protesting against a too lax discipline. What the author of the article in the "Dictionary of Christian Biography" can mean by calling the Donatists "the first Christians who separated from the Church on the ground of discipline" is difficult to see, and he is contradicted by the author of the article on Novatianism, who calls it the "first great schism in the Church on a pure question of discipline," adding reasons for not assigning that title to Montanism. The persecutions which closed with the Edict of Milan found the Church face to face with the same problem that had met

it in the year 250, the problem of the lapsed and their reception. Donatism differs in no essential from Novatianism, and both survived long after the period with which we are at present concerned. Any attempt to deal at all fully with the history of either would require several volumes. The most significant utterance of Donatism is the famous "Quid imperatori cum ecclesiâ?" It is a question which has not been answered yet.

With regard to the actual discipline itself, our information is much fuller for the fourth century than for any of the preceding three, owing to the rise of the councils, and the promulgation of penitentiary canons, which will be found at the end of the volume, briefly summarized. The apostolical constitutions and canons and the Synod of Elvira may be consulted, for they show the comparatively rudimentary development of the discipline up to that time. Stern as were the decrees of Elvira, so stern that Morinus assumes that they came from Novatianism, they give no hint of the more complicated organization of the fourth century. Until then the discipline consisted in (i) temporary prohibition from communion, (ii) total exclusion; and for the latter there is only the slender evidence of the apostolical canons. Nor had the penalties been tabulated. The Church was small and select, and had little reason to do more than rely on the discretion of the bishop. If the account in the apostolical constitutions represents the normal use of the Church, the offender is to be repelled, and if on remonstrance he proves penitent he is to be reinstated after a period of penance lasting from two to seven weeks. More flagrant cases were punished by excision from the Church. In one case only (Apost. Can. 24) is a period of three years' excommunication prescribed. The decrees of Elvira will be found duly arranged according to the severity of their penalties (*infra* pp. 134–137). This synod certainly constitutes a difficulty. Modern research (*vide* Dale and Hefele) agrees in fixing the date *circa* 305, and the absence of any mention of the penitential stations rather argues for an early date, but the severity of the canons is startling, and something of an anachronism.

With the fourth century we find the four stations in full working order. As early as 314 (the Eastern Councils of Neocæsarea and Ancyra, Can. 23, 25) we find the ὡρισμένοι

βαθμοί of penitential stations. We have, however, seen the germ of these stations in Gregory Thaumaturgus, and the last canon, if spurious, must be very little later than Gregory himself. Penitents in the East were divided as follows :—

Mourners = flentes	= προσκλαίοντες.
Hearers = audientes	= ἀκροώμενοι.
Kneelers = substrati	= ὑποπίπτοντες.
Standers = consistentes	= συνιστάμενοι.

The first class consisted only of very heinous offenders. Their station was outside the door of the actual building, in what would nowadays be called the churchyard (cf. Apost. Const., ii. 16; Greg. Thaum., xi. and viii. Also Basil, Canons 22, 56, 57, 58, 59, 64, 66, 73, 75, 80; Greg. Nys., Canon 4). Bingham (Chr. Ant., xviii. 1) says that the weepers were "rather candidates for penance, than penitents strictly speaking." They were both, in reality. It was outside the porch that the penitents implored the faithful to allow them to be admitted to penance at all: and in the same situation they had to wait for a period assigned until they could advance to the next station (see Tert., De Poenit., chap. 9; De Pudit., chap. 4; St. Chrysostom, Homily xvii. in Matt.). To this station the seventeenth canon of Ancyra probably refers. For the length of time assigned see the canons cited. The penitent was expected to present himself regularly outside the church door, and give such proofs as he could, by wearing sackcloth and ashes, shaving his head (or, in case of a woman, veiling, or even shaving the hair), and imploring the intercessions of the worshippers (Bas., Can. 75). He had the added mortification of finding himself below the lowest ranks of the catechumens. See Sozomen, vii. 16 for the usage of the Western Church; also Pacian, Par. ad Poen., 19; Ambrose ad Virg., caps. 8 and 9.

The second station was within the sacred building, near the door, in the narthex of the church. He might in this position listen to the reading of the Scriptures and the sermon, and had to consort with Jews, heretics, and infidels who were attracted to the church by curiosity or other motives, and with the lowest order of catechumens. There is no trace of this station in the West, where "audientes" always means catechumens. Reference to it is made in

Greg. Thaum., c. 11; Basil, Canons 22, 56, 58, 59, 64, 66, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 83; Synod of Ancyra, Canons 4, 6, 9; Council of Nidæa, Canons 11, 12; Apost. Constit., viii. 5; Greg. Nys., Canon 4.

The third station, that of the kneelers, was within the door of the church (Greg. Thaum., c. 11), and the kneeler went out with the catechumens. Basil (Canon 22) mentions this station under the title of "penance," and it is evident that penance in less heinous cases began at this station (Canon 61). He refers to it also in Canons 56, 57, 58, 59, 64, 66, 75 (where admission to this station is granted after special signs of contrition), 80, 81, 82, 83. The station is mentioned in the nineteenth canon of the Council of Laodicea, where the kneelers are called "penitents," and received the benefit of special prayers and imposition of hands (see also Nicæa, Canons 11 and 12, and Ancyra, Canons 4 and 5). The prayer for the penitents is quoted (*infra*, p. 154) from the Apostolic Constitution (see also Chrysostom, Hom. lxxi. on Matt., and xviii. on 2 Cor.). For the practice of the Western Church see Sozomen, H. E., vii. 16.

The fourth station, that of σύστασις (Greg. Thaum., Can. 11) was with the faithful, above the ambo or reading-desk, but probably in rear of the actual communicants. The station is described variously:—

(α) Partaking in prayer only (Ancyra, 4, 16; Nic., 12).
(β) Being present without taking part in the oblation.
χωρὶς προσφορᾶς δέχθεσθαι (Ancyra, 5).
χωρὶς προσφορᾶς κοινωνεῖν (Ancyra, 5, 6, 8, 9; Nic., 11.)
(γ) Prayer without oblation (Ancyra, 24).
(δ) Standers συνεστῶτες (Ancyra, 25).

It is worthy of note that the Synod of Ancyra punished one class of offenders with two years in the third station, and left it with the bishop to determine whether they should remain for a period in the fourth class, or pass immediately to the status of communicant (cf. Elvira, 21, 79). The communion in prayer without the oblation meant non-communicating attendance: the penitent could take no part in the offerings, and therefore no part in the administration. This stage of penance corresponded to the

" abstinere " of Cyprian, just as the *acta*, or *plena poenitentia* answered to the third station. The first two stations are not discoverable in any Western writings, unless total expulsion answered to the first stage : it is at least conceivable that a penitent cast out of the Church might, in the West, implore the worshippers to intercede for him to be allowed to do penance.

Lest it should be supposed, from a study of the Church councils, that a cast-iron system was in vogue, it must be remembered that discretion was left to the bishops to shorten or prolong a penance, and further, that the Fathers always insisted that length of time could not *per se* avail anything, as Gregory of Nyssa remarks (canonical letter : *sub fine*). So, too, Chrysostom (Hom. xiv. § 3 on 2 Cor.). " ' But,' saith one, ' they have been punished for a long time. How long ? tell me. A year, two, three years ? But I require not length of time, but amendment of soul. Shew me whether they have been pricked in the heart, whether they have reformed, and all is done ; since if there be not this, there is no advantage in the time.' " And again (De beato Philogonio, vi. § 4) : " These five days suffice, if you be sober, pray and watch, to cut the chain of your many sins. Care not that the time is short, but think only that the Lord is a lover of men . . . Promise not to do these sins again, and that shall suffice in your defence " (cf. also Ad Theodorum lapsum, i. § 6).

Augustine (Enchiridion, chap. lxv.) : " In the act of repentance, when a crime has been committed of such a nature as to cut off the sinner from the Body of Christ, we are not to take account of the measure of time so much as of the measure of sorrow."

The strictness of the rule which allowed only one penance was maintained, Ambrose (De Poenitentia ii. § 95) writes : " Deservedly are they blamed who think that they can do penance often, for they were wanton against Christ. If they went through their penance whole-heartedly, they would never think that it could be repeated ; for as there is but one baptism, so there is but one course of penance."

Augustine (Ep. cliii. § 7), discussing the case of a man who has done penance and been reconciled to the altar, and then falls into sin again, observes that God still makes the sun to rise upon him. " And although in the Church

there can be granted him not even the lowest place of penance, yet God does not forget to be patient with him. . . . Although it is most carefully and wisely laid down that the opportunity for the most humble penance is to be granted in the Church once only, lest it become a cheap medicine and less useful to sick souls, while the less it is despised the more health it brings; yet still who would dare to say to God: 'Why dost thou yet again spare this man, who after his first penance has again entangled himself in the snares of his wickedness?'"

So again in Serm. 58, "De Temporibus," he is speaking of the danger of habitual sin, and says: "If a man sins once or twice, and without any hypocrisy flies to the medicine of penance, he will speedily recover his former health." But he never speaks of a second penance, although he is dealing with a case in which, if such existed, he would have been bound to mention it.

On the other hand, Chrysostom is reported by Eusebius (H. E., vi. chap. xxi.) to have said, in spite of the decision of an episcopal synod: "Approach, though you may have repented a thousand times." The words are not extant in any published sermon, but they furnished the text for a book by the redoubtable wit, Sisinnius. Such a remark is not consistent with what we know of Chrysostom's character (cf. Euseb., H. E., vi. chap. iv.); and it is possible that he was merely saying what Augustine said (*op. cit.*): "Therefore let no man despair of divine pity, even after a hundred sins or a hundred crimes."

CHAPTER VIII

THE FOURTH CENTURY INTERPRETATION OF CHRIST'S COMMISSION

HAVING arrived at the fourth century (the last with which this book deals) it will be convenient to discover the teaching of the great leaders of Christian thought at that time on the three great passages of our Lord's dealing with ecclesiastical discipline.

On the second passage (Matt. xviii.) Chrysostom writes: "Seest thou how this is done not for the sake of just punishment, but of amendment? Therefore, He doth not at once command to take with him the two, but when he himself hath failed; and not even then doth He send forth a multitude against him, but only adds two, or even one; but when he has despised these too, then and not till then He brings him out to the Church. . . . But if he shall neglect to hear them also, tell it to the Church, that is, to the rulers of it. . . . And He did not say to the ruler of the Church, 'Bind such a man,' but 'if thou bind,' committing the whole matter to the person who is aggrieved, and the bonds remain indissoluble. . . . But these things has He threatened, that these circumstances may not arise. . . . Wherefore I tell you He hath set over him a first, a second, and a third court, so that though he should neglect to hear the first, he may yield to the second; and even if he should reject that, he may fear the third; and though he should make no account of this, yet he may be dismayed at the vengeance to come, and at the sentence and judgment to proceed from God" (Hom. lx. § 2 *in loc.*).

Similarly St. Basil: "The Christian ought to convict the wrongdoer in season, not with the desire for his own vindication, but for his brother's reformation. . . . He who shows another to be wrong ought to do so with all tenderness, in the fear of God, with the object of converting

the sinner. . . . He who after the first and second admonition abides in his fault, ought to be brought before the person in authority (τῷ προεστῶτι), if by being rebuked he may be the more ashamed" (Ep. xxii. §§ 1, 3).

And again: "When public punishment fails to bring a man to his senses, or exclusion from the prayers of the Church to drive him to repentance, it only remains to treat him according to our Lord's directions. Now all this we have done in the case of this person. Firstly, he was accused of his fault; then he was convicted in the mouth of two or three witnesses; thirdly, in the presence of the Church. Thus we have made our solemn protest, and he has not listened to it. Henceforward let him be excommunicated" (Ep. cclxxxviii; cf. also Apost. Const., ii. §§ 37, 38; and Augustine, Ep. ccxi. § 11). The remainder of the passage ("Whatsoever ye shall bind . . .") was always taken as equivalent to the charge in the other two passages, to the interpretation of which we can now pass.

The commission to St. Peter was always regarded as given to the Church as a whole, of which he was the representative.

"See what praises followed this faith. 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.' What meaneth 'upon this rock'? Upon this faith: upon this that has been said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God'" (Aug., Hom. x. on 1 Jn. § 1).

"But when it was said to him, 'To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . .' He denoted the Universal Church, which in this world is shaken by various temptations, as rains, floods, tempests, but falls not because it is founded upon the rock from which Peter had his name. For it is not 'a Petro petra,' but 'Petrus a petra' . . ., just as 'Christ' is not so called from 'Christian,' but 'Christian' from 'Christ.' . . . 'Upon this rock,' which thou hast confessed, 'will I build my Church.' For 'the rock was Christ': upon which foundation Peter himself also was built. . . . The Church, therefore, which is founded on Christ, did in Peter receive from Him 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven': that is, the power of binding and loosing sins" (Aug., Hom. cxxiv. on Jn. § 5).

"For all saints, therefore . . . the chief of the apostles, Peter, received the keys of the kingdom of heaven for the

binding and loosing of sins . . . since both as touching the binding and the loosing of sins, not Peter alone, but the whole Church, doeth this " (*ib.*, § 7; cf. Hom. cxviii. § 4).

" For if the lineal succession of bishops is taken into account, with how much more certainty and benefit to the Church do we reckon back till we reach Peter himself, to whom as representing the whole Church (*totius ecclesiae figuram gerenti*) the Lord said, ' Upon this rock . . . " (Aug., *ib.* Ep., liii. § 2).

" It is not without cause that among all the apostles Peter represents (*personam sustinet*) the Catholic Church: for to this Church were the keys of the kingdom of heaven given when they were given to Peter" (Aug., De Agone Christiano, § 32).

" For if in Peter the Church were not spiritually denoted, the Lord would not have said to him, ' I will give unto thee the keys. . . .' If this was spoken only to Peter, then the Church doeth not this" (Aug., Hom. l. on Jn. § 12).

" Some things are said which seem peculiarly to apply to the apostle Peter, and yet are not clear in their meaning unless when referred to the Church, which he is acknowledged figuratively to have represented, on account of the primacy which he bore among the disciples: as it is written, ' I will give unto thee the keys . . .' and other passages of like purport " (Aug. on Ps. cix. § 1; cf. Sermon lxxvi. § 1; cclxx. § 2; ccxcv. §§ 1, 2).

" So the Lord, before the time of His own judgment, gave His apostles power to loose, that is, to forgive sins: lest that which should be quickly loosed should long remain bound (Matt. xvi. 19, quoted). Novatian heard this not, but the Church of God heard it. . . . What is said to Peter is said to all the apostles. We usurp no power, but we serve under orders " (Ambrose on Ps. xxxix. v. 13).

" The priest's throne is founded in heaven, and has authority to administer heavenly things. Who saith this? The King of heaven Himself (Matt. xvi. 19, quoted). What could be compared with this honour? Heaven receives the beginning of judgment from earth. For the judge sits on the earth, the Lord follows the servant, and whatsoever the servant judges below, He approves above " (Chrysostom, In Oziam (Isa. vi.); cf. also Hom. on Matt. liv. § 3, and lxxxii. §§ 3 and 6).

The Church was considered to be Christ's vice-regent upon earth.

"As a king sending forth deputies gives power to cast into prison and to deliver from it, so in sending them forth Christ invests them with the same power. . . . Wherefore He said not, 'Ye have received the Holy Ghost,' but 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' Yet one will not err in asserting that they received at that time also some spiritual power and grace; not such as to raise the dead or to work miracles, but such as to remit sins. For the gifts of the Spirit are of different kinds; therefore He added, 'Whose sins soever ye remit, they are remitted unto them,' showing what kind of power He was giving" (Chrys., Hom. lxxxvi. on Jn. xx. 22, 23; cf. also Hom. x. on 2 Tim. iv. 22).

"He has given, therefore, the keys to His Church, that whatsoever it should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and whatsoever it should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven; that is to say, that whosoever in the Church should not believe that his sins are remitted, they should not be remitted to him, but that whosoever should believe, and should repent, and turn from his sins, should be saved by the same faith and repentance on the ground of which he is received into the bosom of the Church" (Aug., De Doctrina Christiana, i. 18).

"If this was spoken only to Peter, then the Church doeth not this. But if the thing is done in the Church also, then what things are bound on earth are bound in heaven, and what things are loosed on earth are loosed in heaven, because when the Church excommunicates, the person excommunicated is bound in heaven: and when anyone is reconciled by the Church, the person reconciled is loosed in heaven: if, I say, this thing is done in the Church, then Peter, when he received the keys, denoted the holy Church" (Aug., Hom. 1. on Jn. § 12; cf. Hom. x. on 1 Jn.).

"By breathing on them He signified that the Holy Ghost is not the Father's only, but His. 'Whosesoever sins . . . retained.' The charity of the Church, which by the Holy Ghost is shed abroad in our hearts, remits the sins of them that have no part in her; but the sins of those who have not a part in her, she retains" (Aug., Hom. cxxi. § 4).

"So then no one is without sin save God alone, for no one is without sin except God. And no one forgives sins

but God alone, for it is written : ' Who can forgive sins but God alone ? ' " (Ambrose, De Spiritu Sancto, § 133).

" Let us see now whether the Spirit forgives sins. But on this point there is no room for doubt, since the Lord Himself said, ' Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they shall be forgiven.' Observe that sins are forgiven by the Holy Ghost. But men make use of their own ministry for the forgiveness of sins : they do not exercise the right by any power of their own. For they do not forgive sins in their own name, but in that of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They ask, the Godhead gives : the ministry is of man, the gift is of the Power on high " (*ib.*, § 137, and cf. on Luke v. 23).

" They therefore partook of the Holy Ghost when He breathed on them, saying, ' Receive ye the Holy Ghost. . . .' Christ, when He gave them the Holy Ghost, said, ' Whosesoever sins . . . retained,' though only the living God is able and powerful to grant remission of sins to sinners ; for whom could it befit to pardon the transgressions that sinners have committed against the Divine Law, save the Lawgiver Himself ? You may, if you choose, see the meaning of the saying from the analogy of human affairs. Who has authority to meddle with the decrees of earthly monarchs, and who tries to undo that which has been ordained by the will and judgment of rulers, unless it be someone who is invested with equal honour and dignity ? . . . He thought it meet that they who have been once endued with the Spirit of Him Who is God and Lord should have power also to remit or retain the sins of whomsoever they would, the Holy Ghost that dwelt in them remitting or retaining them according to His will, though the deed were done through human instrumentality. They who have the Spirit of God remit or retain sins in two ways, I think. For they invite to baptism those to whom this Sacrament is already due from the purity of their lives and their tried allegiance to the faith ; and they hinder and exclude those who are not as yet worthy of the Divine grace. And in another sense also they remit and retain sins by rebuking erring children of the Church and granting pardon to those who repent ; just as also Paul gave up him that had committed fornication at Corinth, ' for the destruction of the flesh that the Spirit may be saved,' and re-

admitted him to fellowship, that he might not be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow,' as he says in his letter" (Cyril of Alexandria on Jn. xx. 22, 23).

"For they who inhabit the earth and make their abode there are entrusted with the administration of things heavenly, and have received an authority which God has not given to angels or archangels. For it has not been said to them, 'Whatsoever . . .' (Matt. xviii. 18). They who rule on earth have indeed authority to bind, but only the body: whereas this binding lays hold of the soul and penetrates the heavens; and what priests do here below God ratifies above, and the Master confirms the sentence of His servants. For, indeed, what does he give them but all manner of heavenly authority when he says, 'Whose sins ye remit . . .' (John xx. 23)? What authority could be greater than this?" (Chrysostom, De Sacerdotis, iii. § 5).

"Our priests have received authority to deal, not with bodily leprosy, but with spiritual uncleanness, not to pronounce it removed after examination, but actually and absolutely to take it away" (*ib.*, § 6).

"The remission of sins is the loosing. For what would it have profited Lazarus to come forth from the tomb, unless it had been said to him, 'Loose him and let him go'? He Himself did, indeed, with His voice arouse him from the tomb, Himself restored his life by crying to him, Himself overcame the mass of earth that was heaped upon the tomb, and he came forth bound hand and foot, not therefore with his own feet, but by the power of Him Who drew him forth. This takes place in the heart of the penitent: when thou hearest a man is sorry for his sins he has already come to life; when thou hearest him lay bare his conscience in confession, he is already drawn forth from the tomb, but he is not yet loosed. When is he loosed, and by whom is he loosed? 'Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth,' he says, 'shall be loosed in heaven.' Forgiveness of sins may justly be granted by the Church: but the dead man himself cannot be aroused except by the Lord crying within him" (Aug. on Ps. cii.; ii. § 3; cf. Sermo de Verbis Domini, viii.—Migne, 67).

The only writer of this period who, so far as I have been able to discover, interpreted these sayings of our Lord's in

any different sense was Jerome. In two passages he writes in the same strain as Chrysostom or Augustin.

" Far be it for me to censure the successors of the apostles, who with holy words consecrate the Body of Christ and make us Christians. Having the keys of the kingdom of heaven, they judge men to some extent before the day of judgment, and guard the chastity of the Bride of Christ. . . . I may not sit in the presence of a presbyter ; he, if I sin, may deliver me to Satan (1 Cor. v. 5). Under the old law he who disobeyed the priests was outside the camp and stoned by the people, or else he was beheaded and expiated his crime with his blood. But now the disobedient person is cut down with the spiritual sword, and he is expelled from the Church and torn to pieces with ravening demons " (Letter xiv. to Heliodorus, § 8).

He entirely approves of the treatment of Fabiola.

" Yet it was then that she put on sackcloth, to make public confession of her error. It was then that in the presence of all Rome . . . she stood in the ranks of the penitents and exposed her dishevelled hair, pale features, soiled hands, and unmarked neck, before bishops, presbyters, and people, all of whom wept when they saw her weep. What sins could such a penance fail to put away ? " (Letter lxxvii. to Oceanus, § 4).

Elsewhere, however, the father interprets the words less literally.

" Bishops and priests, misunderstanding this passage, assume something of the Pharisees' haughtiness, with the result that either they condemn innocent men or imagine that they are loosing sinners ; yet God does not ask for the opinion of the priests, but for the life of the sinners. . . . As in Leviticus (xiv.) the priest does not make a leprous man clean or unclean, so here too the bishop and priest do not bind or loose the guilty or the innocent, but in their official capacity (*pro officio suo*) they hear the various kinds of sins, and know who is to be bound and who is to be loosed " (Commentary on Matt. xvi. 19).

" Our brother is to be rebuked privately, lest if he have once and for all lost all sense of shame and modesty, he should continue in his sin. And if he hears us, we gain his soul, and by the salvation of another's soul we too gain salvation. But if he refuses to hear us, a brother is to be

summoned. If he will not hear even him, a third is to be summoned, either to use his skill in admonition or to serve as a witness. But if he is not willing to hear even them, then the story must be told to many, that they may hold him in detestation, and the man who could not be saved by his own sense of shame may be saved by the opprobrium of others. And when it is said, 'Let him be to thee as a gentile and a publican,' it means that a man who, while calling himself a believer, does the work of unbelievers, is to be held in greater detestation than those who are openly 'gentiles.' . . . When He said, 'If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a gentile or a publican,' the unspoken answer or silent thought of the contemptuous brother[1] would be, 'If you despise me, I despise you; if you condemn me, you are condemned by my decree.' He gave the apostles power, that they who come under such men's condemnation may know that the human decree is fortified by the divine, and that whatever is bound on earth is bound equally in heaven" (*ib.* on chap. xviii. 15 *sqq.*).

[1] i.e. the wronged man, who would now despise the other as a gentile and a publican.

CHAPTER IX

CONFESSION

THERE is no definite command from our Lord or His immediate followers to confess sins, except that in James v. 16, although we read of the penitents confessing to the Baptist (Matt. iii. 6) and Paul (Acts xix. 18); and the earliest of the fathers have little to say on the subject. The term exhomologesis, used of confession, was the regular term also for public discipline generally. That penance frequently involved a public recitation of sins in general, or at least the sin or sins for which penance was being done, is sufficiently proved by later writers who assert continually that public confession is not necessary. At the same time where we should most expect to find mention of public confession we are told nothing about it. Bingham, quoting Tertullian's well-known description of exhomologesis (De Poenit., ix.), says: "Here is not a syllable of private auricular confession, but all relates to the public confession before the Church." He adds, however, that there is no mention of public confession either, although the process is described in great detail. The author of the article on "Penance" in the "Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics" (vol. ix. p. 719) remarks that "it cannot be shown that a detailed confession in words was ever part of this" (penance). This is true in a sense: that is, there is no direct evidence for it, but there are certain passages which imply that there was some public confession made in the presence of the faithful. These passages prove that public confession was not obligatory in the writer's day, but they also hint that it had been at least customary, or not unusual.

"Do not disdain to confess your sins, knowing how John baptized . . . and prove that you really hate sin by

making a show of it openly, and triumphing over it as worthy of contempt" (Greg. Naz., Oration on Holy Baptism).

The words are spoken to catechumens, and do not prove anything as to the duties of penitents, but they are significant.

"I do not make confession that I may make a show to many; but inwardly, and in my heart. . . . Nor have I need of many words for my confession, for the groanings of my heart suffice for confession" (Basil on Psalm xxxviii. 8).

"Peter mourned and wept, because, as men will, he erred. I find not what he said: I find that he wept. I read of his tears, I read not of his explanation; but what cannot be defended can be washed away. Let tears wash away the sin which one is ashamed to confess with the voice. . . . Tears express the fault without dread: tears confess the sin without injuring modesty" (Ambrose on Luke xxii. 62).

"Without doubt a sin is less when a person makes a voluntary confession of it, and repents; but where he conceals his misdeeds, he is exposed and denounced against his will, which makes the sin more grievous" (*ib.* De lapsu virginis consecratæ, viii.).

"What then have I to do with men, that they should hear my confessions, as if they could heal all my infirmities? A race, curious to know the lives of others, slothful to amend their own" (Augustine, Confessions, x. § 3).

"Wherefore. I beg, implore, and beseech you to confess frequently to God. I do not bring you to the public stage before your brethren, nor do I compel you to reveal your sins. Unburden your conscience to God, show your wounds to him, and of Him ask medicines" (Chrysostom, De Incomprehensibili Dei Natura, v. § 7).

"But if a man hasten to confess his crimes and show the ulcer to a doctor, who will heal and not reproach, and receive the medicines from him, and speak with him alone, no one else knowing of it, and carefully tell him all, he shall easily be quit of his sin" (Chrysostom on Genesis iv. 23, § 3).

"Not that thou shouldest show thy conscience to me, for thou art not to be judged of man's judgment, but that thou show the sincerity of thy faith to God, Who trieth

the reins and hearts, and knoweth the thoughts of men" (Cyril of Jerusalem, Cat. v. § 2; cf. also Cat. i. §§ 2, 5; ii. §§ 6, 20).

"For why dost thou blush with shame to tell thy sins? Art thou confessing to a man, that he may reproach thee? Art thou confessing to a fellow-servant, for him to make it public property? Nay, but to the Master . . . He saith, 'I do not compel thee to come into the midst of the theatre, in the presence of many witnesses: tell the sin to Me, alone, and in private, that I may heal the sore'" (Cyril, De Lazaro Concio, iv. § 4).

Passages such as these (and more could be quoted) show that there had been a public confession in connection with penance, and an attempt to revive it in Italy in the time of Leo met with his disapproval (Ep. 168).

On the other hand, there is ample evidence for private confession, made to a priest, whether preparatory to public confession, or not. The two passages in Origen have already been cited (Hom. in Num. x. § 1, and Hom. ii., on Psalm 37, p. 67; cf. Cyprian, De Lapsis, 28). Thus by A.D. 250 there is evidence for private, as distinct from public confession. Coming to the fourth century we have the following testimonies:—

"The apostle says to the priest, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man.' What will you do, you who deceive the priest? You who either mislead him when he is ignorant, or, when he knows everything, perplex him by the fact that it is hard to prove the sin. . . . Has he done anything to blush at in the presence of the priest, if he has injured the Lord? . . . But if you are ashamed that the eyes of your brethren should see, do not fear those who are sharers in your misfortune. No physical body rejoices at the suffering of its own members; it grieves with them, and with them labours for a remedy. . . . So he who does not hide his sins from his brethren is absolved by Christ, assisted by the tears of the Church" (Pacian, Paraenesis ad Poenitentiam, § 15). From this it appears that confession was made privately to the priest, while penance was done publicly.

"Will anyone endure that thou shouldest blush to entreat God, when thou dost not blush to entreat a man? That thou shouldest be ashamed to entreat Him from Whom thou art not hid, when thou art not ashamed to confess

thy sin to a man from whom thou art hid? Dost thou shrink from witnesses and sympathizers in thy prayers, when, if thou must render satisfaction to a man, thou hast to visit many and beg them to intervene on thy behalf, when thou throwest thyself before him, kissest his feet, and bringest thy children, still unconscious of the guilt, to intercede for their father's pardon? And dost thou shrink from doing this in the Church in order to entreat God, and to gain for thyself the aid of the holy assembly, where there is no cause for shame, unless it be shame to refuse to confess, for all are sinners" (Ambrose, De Poenitentia, ii. § 91).

Here plainly the confession is private, the discipline public. Ambrose urges this confession in cases where normal confession, made direct to God, does not give relief to the conscience.

"If there be a grave sin which you cannot wash away with the tears of your own penitence, let thy mother the Church weep for thee, she who intercedes for each child as a widow for her only son" (on Luke vi. 12–14; cf. on Psalm xxxviii. 1; and on Luke v. 20). Elsewhere confession to God is urged, though it is not clear whether it is confession made directly to Him, or indirectly through the priest (De Poenitentia, ii. 40, 52, 53; on Psalm xxxvii. 5, 6; Psalm xxxviii. 1, 2, 16, 17, 19; on Luke vi. 18).

The same father protests against people desiring an easy penance.

"Some seek penance because they wish to be restored to communion at once. These desire not so much to loose themselves as to bind the priest, for they do not put off the guilt from their own conscience, but lay it on that of the priest, to whom the command is given, 'Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine'" (De Poenitentia, ii. 87).

"The very eagerness with which we should lay bare our sickness to our spiritual physicians we employ in avoiding this treatment, and show our bravery by struggling against what is for our own interest, our skill in shunning what is for our own health. . . . Those whom we ought to love as our benefactors we keep off, as if they were our enemies. . . . For these various reasons I allege that our office as physicians far exceeds in toilsomeness, and consequently in worth, that which is confined to the body;

and further, because the latter is mainly concerned with the surface, and only in a slight degree investigates the causes which lie deeply hidden. . . . Of this healing we, who are set over others, are the ministers and fellow-labourers" (Greg. Naz., Oration in defence of his flight to Pontus, § 19 *sqq.*).

The testimony of Greg. Nys. will be found in his canonical letter (§ vi., Can. 5).

"No one will dispute that those are meant who preside in the Church, because they live innocently, and because they are entrusted with the confession of secret sins by sinners, sins of which there is no witness save He Who discerns the secrets of every heart. The child will write that they are such as are, so to speak, consumed through their sins; again he will write that they are those who have fled from the burning, and accepted cleansing through penance, like fire that destroys the remaining evil material" (Basil on Isa. x. 19).

"Confession of sins is analagous to confession of bodily ailments. Men do not tell their bodily ailments to everybody, but to men skilled in their healing: so confession of sin should be made in the presence of those who have the power to heal" (Basil, Regulae brevius tractatae, ccxxix.).

"Sins should be confessed to those entrusted with the mysteries of God. For so the penitents of old are found to have confessed to the saints. For it is written in the Gospel that they confessed their sins to John the Baptist, and in the Acts of the Apostles" (*ib.*, cclxxxviii.).

"No one ought to keep secret within himself any desire of the soul (ψυχῆς κίνημα) nor make mention of it incautiously, but should lay bare the secrets of his heart to those trustworthy brethren who are charged with the tender and sympathetic dealing with the weak" (*ib.*, Regulae fusius tractatae, xxvi.).

"If rebuke is healing of the soul, it is not every man's duty to rebuke, any more than it is every man's duty to be a doctor; only for him whom the Superior, after careful examination, shall give permission to do it" (*ib.*, liii.).

At Constantinople (and elsewhere) special priests were appointed to preside over penance, hear confessions, and assign the time, place, and method of penance. The story of the abolition of this office of penitentiary priest will be

found in the appendix. The early system of public confession was not reverted to : everyone chose his or her own spiritual director. Chrysostom succeeded Nectarius (in whose episcopate the penitentiary priest's office was abolished), and his words quoted above were doubtless inspired by the fact that men would not know to whom to go to tell their sin. He is anxious to assure them that confession is as necessary as ever, but that it need not be made publicly, but can be made either to God direct or to His priest.

CHAPTER X

THE CONFLICT WITH NOVATIANISM AND DONATISM

THE *loci classici* for the arguments of the Novatians and the replies of the Catholics are Ambrose's "De Poenitentia" and Pacian's "Epistles to Sympronian." The bishops of Milan and Barcelona necessarily overlap somewhat, and it will be convenient to reduce the works cited to a conversational form, in which "N." shall be a Novatianist and "C." a Catholic.

C. Our position is, briefly, as follows. We follow the example of Christ, Who invited all men to come to Him (Matt. xi. 28), and He would give them rest. He came as the Physician of souls as well as of bodies. Many texts could be adduced to this effect. How can you read out this appeal to the penitents and then be harsh and severe with them?

N. We do not dispute our Lord's words. What we object to is that you arrogate to yourselves divine functions, and forgive when it is only God Who can forgive. We honour Him more than you do, for we do not usurp His prerogatives.

C. Nor do we. Indeed, we honour Him more than you do, for we do not try to reverse His decrees but to carry them out. He gave us His commission in the well-known passages, and we exercise our ministry, claiming our right with much hesitation on account of our many sins, but none the less feeling bound, in accordance with His command, not only to bind and retain, which you do, but to loose and forgive, which you do not do. You cannot have it both ways. Do both (as we do) or neither. Do not bind where you will not loose, and refuse to loose where you have already bound.

N. But the words you quote were spoken to apostles only, not to present-day bishops and priests.

C. Then they alone may baptize, since the command to baptize was addressed to apostles only ! If the authority of the laver and chrism have descended to us from the apostles, why not the power to bind and loose ? Our Lord gave His disciples great powers. He said that they should do, in His name, all that they had seen Him do on earth, yes, and even greater things. They were to cast out devils, take up serpents, speak with tongues, heal the sick, and to bind and loose. Moreover, the power to forgive sins has come down to the laity. " To whom ye forgive anything," writes Paul to Corinthian laymen, " I forgive also : for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes have I forgiven it in the person of Christ " (2 Cor. ii. 10, 11). Nor do we forgive indiscriminately : the greater the sin, the greater the penance. Only after many tears, groans, and outward signs of inward compunction, and the prayers of the faithful, is absolution granted, and that only in such a way as not to prejudge the final tribunal of Christ.

N. We should not mind if you gave absolution for lighter and less heinous sins. But you grant it to people who lapsed in the persecution and fell into idolatry, and restore them to communion. How can you communicate with people who have lapsed into deadly sin ?

C. Our answer is, that if you make an exception in the case of one sin only, that of sacrilege, you are dealing harshly. Our Lord made no such exception. And in any case that was not the opinion of your Novatian, for he averred that no man should have the chance of doing penance, believing that he ought not to bind where he could not loose, lest by binding he should hold out a hope of subsequent loosing. This same Novatian, before he quitted the Church, wrote a book urging that the lapsed should be received again into communion.

N. He held that view once, till he saw that by Christ's ordinance the Church is essentially " holy." By receiving mortal sinners the Church perishes, commits suicide, ceases to be the Church. The Church is the temple of God,

and as such should have no communion with such offenders.

C. Yes, it is; a *large* temple, a great house, having vessels of gold and silver, but some also of wood and earth, some unto honour, some unto dishonour (2 Tim. ii. 20).

N. But we are told that the Church is to be " without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

C. Yes, without heretics, without Valentinians, Cataphrygians, Novatianists! But the sinner and the penitent are not a spot in the Church, because as long as the sinner is unrepentant he is rejected from the Church, and when he ceases to sin he is whole again.

N. But you remit the sin of a penitent, when the only time when you have any authority to do so is at his baptism. That and that alone washes away sin.

C. You do not understand that in neither case is it *we* who forgive. Whether it is baptism or penance, it is God Who forgives. We are only His fellow-workers. Whether we baptize or bid to penance or absolve, we do it only by Christ's authority.

N. But if God bids men *often* to repent, He allows them to sin often.

C. I do not see it. Why does the man who shows the remedy for a sin show the way to the sin? When the physician heals, does he teach a man to be wounded? God does not desire a man to sin even once, but if he does sin He delivers him from his sin. But when He delivers a man from sin He does not teach him to sin. It is one thing to be delivered from danger, and another thing to be forced into it. I might allow your contention if our penance were an easy luxury. But it is a most strenuous business. Will the man who has been healed want to feel again the knife or the cautery? Will he want to sin again when he reads, " Sin no more, lest a *worse* thing befall thee "?

N. But if remission of sins can be given to the penitent, baptism is unnecessary.

C. Not at all. Baptism is the sacrament of the Lord's passion, and the pardon of penitent catechumens who con-

fess their sins is their desert. All may obtain that, for it is the free gift of the grace of God ; but penance is the toil of the few, who after falling into sin rise again, aided by prayers and tears.

N. But what about blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. It has no forgiveness, either in this world or the next ? (Matt. xii. 31, 32).

C. But this makes against you, for it is said that " *every* sin and blasphemy," one only excepted, " shall be forgiven." Why then do not you remit them ? Why do you bind with chains which you will not unloose. All other sins are forgiven to true penitents.

N. What about the man who is forbidden to pray for his brother if the brother is sinning a " sin unto death " ? (1 John v. 16).

C. But he is not *forbidden* to pray, only not commanded to do so. And in any case it does not follow that men who sin a sin unto death may not repent. St. John wrote to certain of the churches of Pergamum who were plainly committing a sin unto death, yet he urged them to repent (Apoc. ii. 12–16). St. Stephen prayed for his murderers, and in the case of Saul it was granted.

N. But we are told that it is impossible to " renew unto repentance " those who have fallen away after baptism.

C. Well, Paul would not preach one thing and, in the case of the Corinthian offender, do another thing. But what he is saying here is not a contradiction, but a statement of an entirely different kind (*non contrarium sed diversum*). Paul means that there can be no second baptism of repentance. But if you persist in saying that this text refers to penance, I retort that there are things possible with God which are not possible with men.

N. That I quite accede to. We are not saying that God cannot forgive these lapsed brethren : only that we human beings cannot.

C. But there is no distinction between us and God in this matter. It is not that we cannot forgive what God

can. What God can forgive, we can forgive ; what He cannot forgive, we cannot forgive. We are only His vicegerents, His vicars, in the matter. The parable of the prodigal son surely shows that if the very gravest sinners make open confession and do penance with their whole heart, they can be forgiven and restored to communion. And if it is a difficulty to you that we restore the lapsed, recollect that we make a distinction. Is the man who willingly denies his master on the same footing as he whom tortures rather than his own free-will have driven to sacrilege ? The vanquished in the games, if they had striven hard and suffered defeat, were granted crowns, particularly if the victory had been snatched from them by craft or fraud. Will Christ allow His athletes to remain unforgiven if He sees that they have yielded for a little to severe tortures ? The case of the incestuous Corinthian seems to meet all your points : no one could have sinned a more deadly sin, yet he was restored to communion by the apostle.

N. But in that same passage the apostle says that "if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one" the Christians "are not to eat." You must take the severe passages into consideration as well as the lenient.

C. I do. But you do not see where we agree and where we differ. I am as desirous as you are to follow out this precept. Neither you nor I would eat with such people. The difference between us lies in that when they repent, giving obvious tokens of a changed heart, you will not restore them to communion, and we will. And, finally, had our Lord desired to make an exception he would have done so. But He left full discretion to the Church. His command is on the broadest possible basis. It is, "Whatsoever thou (ye) shalt bind : whatsoever thou (ye) shalt loose" (Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18); and, "Whosesoever sins ye forgive, whosesoever sins ye retain" (Jn. xx. 23). Where there is no exception made by Him it is not for us to make arbitrary exceptions of our own, but wherever we see (although our human judgment may be fallible) obvious tokens of impenitence, to retain ; and where we see equally obvious tokens of repentance, to remit.

Such was the line of argument between Catholics and Novatians. Gregory of Nazianzus traverses the schismatics' position in a fine passage in the " Oration on the funeral lights " (§§ 18, 19).

" Will you not admit even David's penitence . . . nor that of the great Peter himself, who fell into human weakness at the passion of our Saviour ? Yet Jesus received him, and by the triple confession healed the triple denial. Or the transgressor at Corinth ? But Paul confirmed love toward him when he saw his amendment. . . . And will you refuse to allow young widows to marry because, owing to their youth, they may fall ? Paul ventured to do so ; but, of course, you can teach him ! ' But these sins were not after baptism,' you will say. Where is your proof ? Either prove it, or refrain from condemnation ; and if there be any doubt, let charity prevail. ' But Novatus,' you will say, ' would not receive those who lapsed in the persecution.' What do you mean by this ? If they were impenitent, he was right : I, too, would never receive those who either would not humble themselves at all, or not sufficiently, and who would refuse to make their amendment counterbalance their sin, and when I do receive them, I will assign them their proper place ; but if he rejected those who wore themselves away with weeping, I will not imitate him. And why should Novatus' want of charity be a rule for me ? He never punished covetousness, which is a second idolatry, but he condemned fornication as though he himself were not flesh and body."

Donatism was the successor of Novatianism in the West, and was naturally met by more or less the same arguments. Its chief opponents were Augustine and Optatus. Augustine's position is that there are certain comparatively trivial sins for which we do a daily penance when we beat our breasts and say, " Forgive us our trespasses " ; but there are also certain graver sins which necessitate temporary exclusion and penitential discipline (Ep. cclxv. §§ 2, 7, 9 ; Ep. clvii. § 2 ; Sermo de Diversis, xxxiv. § 12 ; De Symbolo ad Catechumenos, §§ 15, 16). In three ways were sins blotted out : by baptism, by prayer, and by the greater humiliation of penance. The keys were granted to St. Peter as representative of the Church, and " therefore if they represented the Church, and this was said to them as to the Church

itself, it follows that the peace of the Church looses sins, and estrangement from the Church retains them. For the rock retains, the rock remits ; the dove retains, the dove remits ; unity retains, unity remits. But the peace of this unity exists only in the good, in those who are already spiritual, or are advancing by the obedience of concord to spiritual things ; it exists not in the bad, whether they make disturbances outside the Church or are endured within the Church with lamentation, baptizing and being baptized. . . . Yet men of this type used to baptize in the time of Cyprian himself ; and he confesses with many lamentations that they were his fellow-bishops, and endures them with the grand reward of tolerance. Yet they did not confer remission of sins, which is granted through the prayers of the saints, that is, the groans of the dove. . . . For the Lord would not say, 'Whosesoever sins ye remit . . .' to robbers and usurers" (De Baptismo contra Donatistas, Bk. III, chap. xviii. on Jn. xx. 21–3). "So, therefore, the baptism of the Church may exist outside, but the gift of the life of happiness is found within the Church alone, for it is founded on a rock, and has received the keys of binding and loosing" (*ib.* Bk. IV, chap. i.).

No small part of the Donatists' difficulty was that to them the validity of a sacerdotal act depended on the virtue of the agent : were *traditores,* therefore, eligible for the priest's office ? Or if they were *traditores* after ordination, could they be reinstated ? The Church which replied "Yes" was no true Church in Donatist eyes. The first general council had already laid down that "the Catholic Church requires men who are blameless" ; that men ordained without adequate scrutiny, or men who, having been ordained, confessed their crimes, were to be considered as having received invalid ordination (Canon 9), and further that lapsed clergy should be deposed (Canon 10). But Augustine avers (De Correctione Donatistarum, chap. x.) that this was laid down "not to despair of indulgence being granted, but merely to maintain a rigorous discipline."

On the vexed question of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, Augustine writes (*ib.*, chap. xi.) : "Let them understand that it is not every sin, but only some one sin against the Holy Ghost which is unpardonable. . . . But this is the hardness of heart which even to the end of life leads

a man to refuse to accept remission of sins in the unity of the body of Christ, to which life is given by the Holy Ghost. For when He had said to His disciples, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," He immediately added, "Whosesoever sins ye remit. . . ." Whoever, therefore, has resisted or fought against this gift of God's grace, or has been estranged from it in a way to the end of this mortal life, shall not receive the remission of that sin, either in this world or in the world to come."

Discipline must of course be ministered. "Nor would I, therefore, be understood to urge that it should be set at naught, and that everyone should be allowed to do exactly as he pleased, with no check, no kind of healing chastisement, and lenience which should inspire fear, the severity of love. . . . Yet far be it from the servants of the father of the family that they should forget the command of their Lord and be so inflamed with the fire of holy indignation against the multitude of the tares, that while they seek to gather them in bundles before the time, the wheat will be rooted up with them. And of this sin these men would be held guilty, even though they proved that they brought true charges against the *traditores* whom they accused" (Contra Literae Petiliani, Book III, chap. iv.). He quotes the usual texts, Matt. iii. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 20; Matt. xxv. 32, and adds: "The field is the world, not Africa only, and the harvest is the end of the world, not the era of Donatus only" (*ib.* chap. ii.).

"There are within the Church both good and bad; wheat and chaff. Let no one leave the floor before the time, but let him bear with the chaff in the time of threshing. . . . There will be a bodily separation, which a spiritual separation now precedes. In heart be always separated from the bad; in body be united with them for a time: only with caution. Yet be not remiss in correcting those who belong to you" (Serm. lxxxviii. § 19; cf. De Baptismo contra Donatistas, Bk. VII, chap. li.).

The *locus classicus* for the controversy with Donatism is Optatus' "Letter to Parmenian." The reader is referred to Fr. Vassall Phillips' interesting work on Optatus. Broadly speaking, the chief difference between Optatus and Parmenian was that Optatus discovered the marks of the true Church in the unbroken succession of bishops, a priesthood

independent for its validity upon the worthiness of its members, and an orthodox faith, while Parmenian finds the true Church in worthy members : the one lays stress on a visible, the other on an invisible Church. Optatus insists (ii. 25) that " in the time of persecution, although certain bishops fell away through cowardice, and refusing to confess the name of God offered incense (to idols), yet not one of those (bishops) who escaped either laid hands on the lapsed (bishops) or had them bow the knee in penance."

It is significant that Optatus avoids identifying the " field " in the parable with the world. " . . . the gospels, in which is described a field which is the whole world, in which is the Church, and the sower is Christ, Who gives healthful precepts. On the other hand, there is an evil man, the devil, who sows unhealthful sins, not in the light but in the night. Different kinds of seeds grow in the one field, just as in the Church there is not a crowd of souls all alike. . . . Therefore, we have agreed to receive in unity you who have been drawn to us, for we may not reject or refuse sinners born in the same field as ourselves, nourished with one rain, that is, one baptism, since the prophets were not permitted to separate the wheat and the tares, for the separation could not take place without both being uprooted, lest the useful should be trampled on while the useless is being rooted up. Likewise has Christ commanded that in His field throughout the whole world, in which is the one Church, His own and the other's seeds should grow together " (vii. § 2).

The Donatist answer was obvious. If Christ was referring to the world, what bearing has the parable on the controversy ? Everyone knows that there are good and bad, wheat and tares, in the world. The question is, how far are the latter to be allowed in the *Church ?* And this retort Donatism did not make. Neither side perceived that they were arguing about a question of degree. The Novatians could not, in view of the Circumcelliones and their excesses, claim perfection : no Donatist would claim it for himself, much less for others. Equally the Catholics would exclude and excommunicate a notorious sinner. The question really was, in this as in so many other cases, where was the line to be drawn ?

Nor did the Donatists press, as they might have done, their watchword : " Quid imperatori cum ecclesia ? " They owed something to Julian, and may have, therefore, felt some hesitation in urging it. But the question had been uttered long before, and there are countries which have even yet not decided upon the answer. Church discipline cannot be revived unless the Church has adequate powers of self-government : without them, her discipline must be trivial almost to the point of non-existence.

CHAPTER XI

ST. BASIL

SOME extracts from this Father will be found elsewhere in this volume; his canonical letters have been summarized and placed in this chapter. He had to deal with a state of relaxed discipline. "I am much distressed," he writes, "that the canons of the Fathers have fallen through, and that the exact discipline of the Church has been banished from among you. . . . Drive out unworthy men from the Church, and purge it." This was *à propos* of the ordination by Choriepiscopi of unworthy men without the writer's knowledge (Letter LIV). In the next letter he writes: "Read the canon put forth by our holy fathers at the council of Nicæa, which distinctly forbids *subintroductae*. . . . If you persist in clinging to your clerical position without amending your ways, you will be accursed before all the people, and all who receive you will be excommunicated throughout the Church" (cf. also Letter LXI, to Athanasius). But he was not unduly severe. "I consider it an equal mistake to let the guilty go unpunished, and to exceed the proper limits of punishment," he writes (Letter CCLXXXIX) in passing a sentence of excommunication. He lays down the principle that to condone a sin is to be guilty of it (John xix. 11), and to be silent about it is equally blameworthy (Matt. xviii. 15–17) ("Regulae brevius tractatae," xlvi., xlvii.); and in the case of the abducted girl he gave orders that the man was to be shut out from the prayers and excommunicate, while his accomplices and all their households are likewise to be shut out from the prayers. Equal treatment is to be meted out to the village which entertained the girl after the abduction and fought against her restitution (Letter CCLXX). His "Regulae brevius tractatae" give a good idea of his mind. The erring brother is to be treated on the lines of

Matthew xviii. 15–17 ; 2 Corinthians ii. 6 ; 1 Timothy iv. 2 ; 2 Thessalonians iii. 14 (III) ; the prodigal son is the type of the true penitent (VIII) ; no man need despair of forgiveness for post-baptismal sin (XIII) ; a man under suspicion of sin may be watched, if it be in the spirit of the love of Christ and a desire to heal him if he has really sinned (XIX). Lastly, in answer to the question, " A man who is generally in the right, and falls into one sin, how is he to be treated ? " he replies, " As the Lord treated Peter " (LXXXIII).

Letter CLXXXVIII (*Canonica prima*).

§ ii. " The woman who purposely destroys her unborn child is guilty of murder. . . . The punishment of these women should not be for life, but for the term of ten years. And let their treatment depend not on mere lapse of time, but on the character of their repentance."

§ iii. A deacon who commits fornication after his appointment to the diaconate is to be deposed. But, after he has been rejected and ranked among the laity, he is not to be excluded from communion. For there is an ancient canon (Can. Apost. 25) that those who have fallen from their degree are to be subjected to this kind of punishment alone.

§ iv. In the case of trigamy and polygamy they laid down the same rule, in proportion, as in the case of digamy ; namely, one year for digamy (some authorities say two years) ; for trigamy men are separated for three and often for four years. . . . In cases of trigamy we have accepted a seclusion of five years, not by the canons, but following the precept of our predecessors. Such offenders ought not to be altogether prohibited from the privileges of the Church ; they should be considered deserving of being hearers after two or three years, and afterwards of being permitted to stand in their place ; but they must be kept from the communion of the good gift, and only restored to the place of communion after showing some fruit of repentance.

§ v. Heretics repenting at death ought to be received ; yet to be received, of course, not indiscriminately, but on

trial of exhibition of true repentance and of producing fruit in evidence of their zeal for salvation.

§ vi. The fornication of canonical persons (*τῶν κανονικῶν*) is not to be received as wedlock, and their union is to be completely dissolved, for this is both profitable for the security of the Church, and will prevent the heretics from having a ground of attack against us, as though we induced men to join us by the attraction of liberty to sin.

[Canonicae were women devoted to good works, living apart from men. They did not take vows, nor were they deaconesses (Epp. lii., clxxiii; Soc., H. E., i. 17; Soz. viii. 23).]

§ vii. Abusers of themselves with mankind, and with beasts, as also murderers, wizards, adulterers, and idolaters, are deserving of the same punishment. Whatever rule you have in the case of the rest, observe also in their case. There can, however, be no doubt that we ought to receive those who have repented of impurity committed in ignorance for thirty years. In this case there is ground for forgiveness in ignorance, in the spontaneity of confession, and the long extent of time. Perhaps they have been delivered to Satan for a whole age of man, that they may learn not to behave unseemly (1 Tim. i. 20); wherefore order them to be received without delay, especially if they shed tears to move your mercy, and show a manner of living worthy of compassion.

§ xi. The man who is guilty of unintentional homicide has given sufficient satisfaction in eleven years.

§ xii. The canon absolutely excludes digamists from the ministry.

Letter CXCIX (*Canonica secunda*).

§ xviii. Concerning fallen virgins, who, after professing a chaste life before the Lord, make their vows vain because they have fallen under the lusts of the flesh, our fathers, tenderly and meekly making allowance for the infirmities of them that fall, laid down that they might be received after a year, ranking them with the digamists.

§ xxii. In the case of a man having a wife by seduction, be it secret or by violence, he must be held guilty of fornication. The punishment of fornicators is fixed at four years. In the first year they must be expelled from prayer, and weep at the door of the church ; in the second they may be received to sermon ; in the third to penance ; in the fourth to standing with the people, while they are withheld from the oblation. Finally, they may be admitted to the communion of the good gift.

§ xxiii. Concerning men who marry two sisters, or women who marry two brothers . . . the man who has taken his own brother's wife is not to be received until he have separated from her.

§ xxiv. A widow whose name is in the list of widows, that is, who has been received with the order of deaconesses [or, possibly, "is supported by the Church" (*διακονουμένην*)], is ordered by the apostle to be supported no longer when she marries. There is no special rule for a widower. The punishment appointed for bigamy may suffice. If a widow who is sixty years old choose again to live with a husband, she shall be held unworthy of the communion of the good gift until she be moved no longer by her impure desire. If we reckon her before sixty years, the blame rests with us, and not with the woman.

§ xxvii. As to the priest ignorantly involved in an illegal marriage, I have made the fitting regulation, that he may hold his seat, but must abstain from other functions. For such a case pardon is enough. It is unreasonable that the man who has to treat his own wounds should be blessing another, for benediction is the imparting of holiness. How can he who through his fault, committed in ignorance, is without holiness, impart it to another ? Let him bless neither in public nor in private, nor distribute the body of Christ to others, nor perform any other sacred function, but, content with his seat of honour, let him beseech the Lord with weeping, that his sin, committed in ignorance, may be forgiven.

§ xxx. As to those guilty of abduction we have no ancient rule, but I have expressed my own judgment. The period is three years (see § xxii.) ; the culprits and their accomplices to be excluded from service (cf. Ep. cclxx.).

§ xxxi. Clergymen who are guilty of the sin unto death (i.e. a sin committed wilfully with full knowledge—see Commentary on Isa. iv.) are degraded from their order, but not excluded from the communion of the laity. Thou shalt not punish twice for the same fault (Nahum i. 9).

§ xxxiv. Women who had committed adultery, and confessed their fault through piety, or were in any way convicted, were not allowed by our fathers to be publicly exposed, that we might not cause their death after conviction. But they ordered that they should be excluded from communion till they had fulfilled their term of penance.

§ xxxv. In the case of a man deserted by his wife, the cause of the desertion must be taken into account. If she appear to have abandoned him without reason, he is deserving of pardon, but the wife of punishment. Pardon will be given to him, that he may communicate with the Church.

§ xxxviii. Girls who follow against their fathers' will commit fornication; but if their fathers are reconciled to them, the act seems to admit of a remedy. They are not, however, immediately restored to communion, but are to be punished for three years.

§ xliv. The deaconess who commits fornication with a heathen may be received into repentance and will be admitted to the oblation in the seventh year; of course, if she be living in chastity. The heathen who, after he has believed, takes to idolatry, returns to his vomit. We do not, however, give up the body of the deaconess to the use of the flesh, as being consecrated.

§ li. As to the clergy, the Canons have enjoined without making any distinction that one penalty is assigned for the lapsed—ejection from the ministry, whether they be in orders or remain in the ministry which is conferred without laying on of hands (i.e. presbyters, deacons, and subdeacons, and the minor officers, as readers, exorcists, etc.).

§ liv. I know that I have already written to your reverence, so far as I can, on the distinctions to be observed in cases of involuntary homicide, and on this point I can say no more. It rests with your intelligence to increase or lessen the severity of the punishment as each individual case may require.

§ lvi. The intentional homicide, who has afterwards repented, will be excommunicated from the sacrament for twenty years. The twenty years will be appointed for him as follows : for four he ought to weep, standing outside the door of the house of prayer, beseeching the faithful as they enter in to offer prayer in his behalf, and confessing his own sin. After four years he will be admitted among the hearers, and during five years he will go out with them. During seven years he will go out with the kneelers, praying. During four years he will only stand with the faithful, and will not take part in the oblation. On the completion of this period he will be admitted to the sacrament.

§ lvii. The unintentional homicide will be excluded for ten years from the sacrament. The ten years will be arranged as follows : for two years he will weep, for three years he will continue among the hearers, for four he will be a kneeler, and for one he will only stand. Then he will be admitted to the holy rites.

§ lviii. The adulterer will be excluded from the sacrament for fifteen years. During four he will be a weeper, during five a hearer, during four a kneeler, and for two years a stander without communion.

§ lix. The fornicator will not be admitted to participation in the sacrament for seven years ; weeping two, hearing two, kneeling two, and standing one : in the eighth he will be received into communion.

§ lxi. The thief, if he have repented of his own accord, and charged himself, shall only be prohibited from partaking of the sacrament for a year ; if he be convicted, for two years. The period shall be divided between kneeling and standing. Then let him be held worthy of communion.

§ lxiv. Perjurers shall be excommunicated for ten years ; weeping for two, hearing for three, kneeling for four, and standing only during one year ; then they shall be held worthy of communion.

§ lxv. He who confesses magic or sorcery shall do penance for the time of murder, and shall be treated in the same manner as he who convicts himself of this sin.

§ lxvi. The tomb-breaker shall be excommunicated for ten years, weeping for two, hearing for three, kneeling for four, standing for one ; then he shall be admitted.

§ lxvii. Incest with a sister shall incur penance for the same time as murder.

§ lxix. The reader who has intercourse with his betrothed before marriage, shall be allowed to read after a year's suspension, remaining without advancement. If he has had secret intercourse without betrothal, he shall be deposed from his ministry. So, too, the minister (i.e. the subdeacon ?).

§ lxx. The deacon who has been polluted in lips, and has confessed his commission of this sin, shall be removed from his ministry. But he shall be permitted to partake of the sacrament together with the deacons. The same holds good in the case of a priest. If anyone be detected in a more serious sin, whatever be his degree, he shall be deposed.

§ lxxi. Whoever is aware of the commission of any one of the aforementioned sins, and is convicted without having confessed, shall be under punishment for the same space of time as the actual perpetrator.

§ lxxii. He who has entrusted himself to soothsayers, or any such persons, shall be under discipline for the same time as the homicide.

§ lxxiii. He who has denied Christ, and sinned against the mystery of salvation, ought to weep all his life long, and is bound to remain in penitence, being deemed worthy of the sacrament in the hour of death, through faith in the mercy of God.

§ lxxiv. If, however, each man who has committed the former sins is made good, through penitence (ἐξομολογούμενος), he to whom is committed by the loving-kindness of God the power of binding and loosing will not be deserving of condemnation, if he becomes less severe, as he beholds the exceeding greatness of the penitence of the sinner, so as to lessen the period of punishment, for the history in the Scriptures informs us that all who exercise penitence with greater zeal quickly receives the loving-kindness of God.

§ lxxv. The man who has been polluted with his own sister, either on the father's or the mother's side, must not be allowed to enter the house of prayer, until he has given up his iniquitous and unlawful conduct. And after he has come to a sense of that fearful sin, let him weep for three years, standing at the door of the house of prayer, and entreating the people as they go in to prayer that each and all will mercifully offer on his behalf their prayers with earnestness unto the Lord. After this let him be received for another period of three years to hearing alone, and while hearing the Scriptures and the instruction let him be expelled and not admitted to prayer. Afterwards, if he has asked it with tears and has fallen before the Lord with contrition of heart and great humiliation, let kneeling be accorded to him during another three years. Then, when he shall have worthily shown the fruits of repentance, let him be received in the tenth year to the prayer of the faithful without oblation ; and after standing with the faithful in prayer for two years, then, and not till then, let him be held worthy of the communion of the good thing.

§ lxxvi. The same rule applies to those who take their own daughters-in-law.

§ lxxvii. He who abandons the wife lawfully united to him, is subject by the sentence of the Lord to the penalty of adultery. But it has been laid down as a canon by our Fathers that such sinners should weep for a year, be hearers for two years, be kneelers for three years, stand with the faithful in the seventh ; and thus be deemed worthy of the oblation, if they have repented with tears.

§ lxxviii. Let the same rule hold good in the case of those who marry two sisters, although at different times (see Letter CLX).

§ lxxx. On polygamy the Fathers are silent, as being brutish and altogether inhuman. The sin seems to me worse than fornication. It is therefore reasonable that such sinners should be subject to the canons ; namely, a year's weeping, three years' kneeling, and then reception.

§ lxxxi. During the invasion of the barbarians many men have sworn heathen oaths, tasted things unlawfully offered them in magic temples, and so have broken the faith

in God. Let regulations be made in the case of those men in accordance with the canons laid down by our Fathers. Those who have endured grievous tortures and have been forced to denial, through inability to sustain the anguish, may be excluded for three years, hearers for two, unclean for three, and so be received into communion. Those who have abandoned their faith in God, laying hands on the tables of the demons and swearing heathen oaths, without undergoing great violence, should be excluded for three years, hearers for two. When they have prayed for three years as kneelers, and have stood three years more with the faithful in supplication, then let them be received into the communion of the good thing.

§ lxxxii. As to perjurers, if they have broken their oaths under violent compulsion, they are under lighter penalties and may therefore be received after six years. If they break their faith without compulsion, let them be weepers for two years, hearers for three, pray as kneelers for five, during two more be received into the communion of prayer without oblation, and so at last, after giving proof of due repentance, they shall be restored to the communion of the body of Christ.

§ lxxxiii. Those who consult soothsayers and they who follow heathen customs, or bring persons into their houses to discover remedies and to effect purification, should fall under the canon for six years. After weeping a year, hearing a year, kneeling for three years, and standing with the faithful for a year let them be received.

APPENDIX I

Eusebius, H. E., IV. 14

(Cf. iii. 28, similar story about St. John)

"HE (Polycarp) also was in Rome in the time of Anicetus and caused many to turn away from the above-mentioned heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received from the apostles this one and only system of truth which has been transmitted by the Church. And there are those that heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe in Ephesus, and seeing Cerinthus within, ran out of the bath-house without bathing, crying, 'Let us flee, lest even the bath fall, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.' And Polycarp himself, when Marcion once met him and said, 'Knowest thou us?' replied, 'I know the first-born of Satan.' Such caution did the apostles and their disciples exercise that they might not even converse with those who perverted the truth; as Paul also said, 'A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself'" (Tit. iii. 10, 11).

V, 1 (§ 32, 32). "Then a certain great dispensation of God occurred, and the companion of Jesus appeared beyond measure, in a manner rarely seen among the brotherhood, but not beyond the power of Christ. For those who had recanted at their first arrest were imprisoned with the others, and endured terrible sufferings, so that their denial was of no profit to them even for the present. But those who confessed that they were imprisoned as Christians had no further accusation brought against them. But the first were treated afterwards as murderers and defiled, and were punished twice as severely as the others. . . . Their consciences so distressed the former (those who had denied Christ) that they were early distinguishable from all the rest by their very countenances when they were led forth. . . . They were downcast and humble and dejected and filled with every kind of disgrace, and they were reproached by the heathen as ignoble and weak, bearing the accusation as murderers, and having lost the one and glorious and life-giving Name."

V, 2 (*re* confessors at Lyons). "They humbled themselves under the mighty hand, by which they are now greatly exalted. They defended all (πᾶσι μὲν ἀπελογοῦντο), but accused none. They absolved all (ἔλυον), but bound none. . . . For, through the genuineness of their love, their greatest contest with him was that the Beast, being choked, might cast out alive those whom he supposed he had swallowed. For they did not boast over the fallen, but helped them in their need with those things in which they themselves abounded, having the compassion of a mother, and shedding many tears on their account before the Father."

VI, 42, § 5. (Dionysius) a little further on adds: "These divine martyrs among us, who are now seated with Christ, and are sharers in His kingdom, partakers of His judgment and judges with Him, received some of the brethren who had fallen away and became chargeable with the guilt of sacrificing. When they perceived that their conversion and repentance were sufficient to be acceptable with Him, Who by no means desires the death of the sinner, but his repentance, having proved them they received them back and brought them together and had fellowship with them in prayers and feasts (προσευχῶν καὶ ἑστιασέων, of *private* communion; only bishops to restore to eucharistic privileges). What counsel, then, brethren, do you give us concerning such persons what should we do? Shall we have the same judgment and rule as theirs, and observe their decision and charity, and show mercy to those whom they pitied? Or shall we declare their decision unrighteous, and set ourselves as judges of their opinion, and grieve mercy and overturn order?" These words Dionysius very properly added when making mention of those who had been weak in time of persecution.

Euseb., Hist. V. 2, on Martyrdoms at Lyons. Letter from churches of Lyons and Vienne. "They did not proudly triumph over those that fell." . . . Euseb.'s comment. "Let this narration of the love of those blessed ones towards those that fell be added to our own profit: on account of the inhuman and merciless disposition of those who afterwards behaved most cruelly to Christ's members."

Socrates

Book I, chapter x. "When, therefore, the Emperor (Constantine) further asked him (Acesius, bishop of the Novatianists), 'For what reason, then, do you separate yourself from communion from the rest of the Church?' he related what had taken place during the persecution under Decius; and referred to the rigidness of that austere canon (1 John v. 16) which declares, that it is not right persons who after baptism have

committed a sin, which the sacred Scriptures denominate 'a sin unto death' to be considered worthy of participation in the sacraments [θείων μυστηρίων]: that they should indeed be exhorted to repentance, but were not to expect remission from the priests, but from God, Who is able and has authority to forgive sins." (Cf. Soz. I, xxii.)

Book IV, chapter xxviii. "How this happened I shall state, after first explaining the reason of the strict discipline which is maintained in their Church, even to the present day, in the provinces of Phrygia and Paphlagonia. Novatus, a presbyter of the Roman Church, separated from it because Cornelius, the bishop, received into communion believers who had sacrificed during the persecution which the Emperor Decius had raised against the Church. Having receded on this account, on being afterwards elevated to the episcopate by such bishops as entertained similar sentiments, he wrote to all the churches, that 'they should not admit to the sacred mysteries those who had sacrificed; but exhorting them to repentance, leave the pardoning of their offence to God, Who has the power to forgive all sin.'" "Receiving such letters, the parties in the various provinces to whom they were addressed, acted according to their several dispositions and judgments. As he asked that they should not receive to the Sacraments those who after baptism had committed any deadly sin this appeared to some a cruel and merciless course; but others received the rule as just and conducive to the maintenance of discipline and the promotion of greater devotedness of life. In the midst of the agitation of this question, letters arrived from Cornelius, the bishop, promising indulgence to delinquents after baptism. Thus as these two persons wrote contrary to one another, and each confirmed his own procedure by the testimony of the divine word, as it usually happens, everyone identified himself with that view which favoured his previous habits and inclination. Those who had pleasure in sin, encouraged by the licence then granted them, took occasion from it to revel in every species of criminality. Now the Phrygians appear to be more temperate than other nations, and are seldom guilty of swearing. The Scythians, on the other hand, and the Thracians, are naturally of a very irritable disposition, while the inhabitants of the East are addicted to sensual pleasures. But the Paphlagonians and Phrygians are prone to neither of these vices; nor are the sports of the circus and theatrical exhibitions in much estimation among them even at the present day. And for this reason, it seems to me these people, as well as others of the same character, so readily assented to the letters then written by Novatus.

Fornication and adultery are regarded among them as the grossest enormities: and it is well known that there is no race of men on the face of the earth who more rigidly govern their passions in this respect than the Phrygians and Paphlagonians. The same reason I think had force with those who dwelt in the West and followed Novatus."

Book V, chapter xix (391; cf. Bingham, Christ. Ant., 18, 3). "At this time it was deemed requisite to abolish the office of those presbyters in the churches who had charge of the penitencies; this was done on the following account. When the Novatians separated themselves from the Church because they would not communicate with those who had lapsed during the persecution under Decius, the bishops added to the ecclesiastical order a presbyter of penitence in order that those who had sinned after baptism might confess their sins in the presence of the presbyter thus appointed. And this mode of discipline is still maintained among other heretical institutions by all the rest of the sects; the Homoousians only, together with the Novatians who hold the same doctrinal views, have abandoned it. The latter, indeed, would never admit of its establishment (Euseb., H. E., vi. 43): and the Homoousians who are now in possession of the churches, after retaining its function for a considerable period, abrogated it in the time of Nectarius, in consequence of an event which occurred in the Constantinopolitan Church, which is as follows: A woman of noble family coming to the penitentiary, made a general confession of those sins she had committed since her baptism: and the presbyter enjoined fasting and prayer continually, that together with the acknowledgment of error, she might have to show works also meet for repentance. Some time after this, the same lady again presented herself, and confessed that she had been guilty of another crime, a deacon of the church having slept with her. When this was proved the deacon was ejected from the Church; but the people were very indignant, being not only offended at what had taken place, but also because the deed had brought scandal and degradation upon the Church. When, in consequence of this, ecclesiastics were subjected to taunting and reproach, Eudaemon, a presbyter of the Church, by birth an Alexandrian, persuaded Nectarius, the bishop, to abolish the office of penitentiary presbyter, and to leave everyone to his own conscience with regard to the participation of the sacred mysteries: for thus only, in his judgment, could the Church be saved from obloquy. Having heard this explanation of the matter from Eudaemon I have ventured to put it in the present treatise. . . . My observation to Eudaemon, when he first related the circum-

stance, was this: 'Whether, O presbyter, your counsel has been profitable for the Church or otherwise, God knows; but I see that it takes away the means of rebuking one another's faults, and prevents our acting upon that precept of the apostle: Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them'" (cf. Soz., vii. 6).

Book V, chapter xxii. "At Cæsarea of Cappadocia they exclude from communion those who have sinned after baptism, as the Novatians do. The same discipline was practised by the Macedonians in the Hellespont, and by the Quartodecimans in Asia. The Novatians in Phrygia do not admit such as have twice married (he who has been twice married after baptism . . . cannot become bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any other cleric included in the sacerdotal list, Apost. Can. 17); but those of Constantinople neither admit nor reject them openly, while in the Western parts they are received. This diversity was occasioned, I imagine, by the bishops, who, in their respective eras, governed the Churches; and those who received these several rites and usages transmitted them as laws to their posterity."

SOZOMEN

Book IV, chapter xx. "At this period (before Seleucia), a union was nearly effected between the Novatian and Catholic Churches; for as they held the same opinions concerning the Godhead, and were subjected to a common persecution, the members of both Churches assembled and prayed together. The Catholics then (under Julian) possessed no houses of prayer, for the Arians had wrested them from them. It appears, too, from the frequent intercourse between the members of each Church, they reasoned that the differences between them were vain, and they resolved to commune with one another. A reconciliation would certainly have been effected, I think, had not the desire of the multitude been frustrated by the slander of a few individuals, who asserted that there was an ancient law prohibiting the union of the churches."

Book V, chapter xvi. "He (Julian) wished to introduce among the pagans the Christian system of penance for voluntary and involuntary transgressions; but the point of ecclesiastical discipline which he chiefly admired, and desired to establish among the pagans, was the custom among the bishops to give letters of recommendation to those who travelled to foreign lands, wherein they commended them to the hospitality and kindness of other bishops, in all places, and under all contingencies."

Book VI, chapter xxv. "When Theodotus, the predecessor of George, ruled the Church of Laodicæa, Epiphanius, the Sophist, recited a hymn which he had composed in honour of Dionysus. Apollinaris, who was then a youth and a pupil of Epiphanius, went to hear the recitation, accompanied by his father, whose name was also Apollinaris, and was a noted grammarian. After the exordium, Epiphanius, according to the custom always observed at the public recitation of hymns, directed the uninitiated and the profane to go out of doors. But neither the younger nor the elder Apollinaris, nor, indeed, any of the Christians who were present, left the audience. When Theodotus, the bishop, heard that they had been present during the recitation, he was exceedingly displeased; he, however, pardoned the laymen who had committed this error, after they had received a moderate reproof. With respect to Apollinaris, father and son, he convinced them both publicly of their sin, and ejected them from the Church; for they both belonged to the clergy, the father being a presbyter, and the son a reader of the Holy Scriptures. After some time had elapsed, and when the father and son had evinced by tears and fasting a degree of repentance adequate to their transgression, Theodotus restored them to their offices in the Church. When George received the same bishopric, he excommunicated Apollinaris, and treated him as alien to the Church on account of his having, as before stated, received Athanasius into communion. It is said that Apollinaris besought him repeatedly to restore him to communion, but that he was inexorable. Apollinaris, overcome with grief, disturbed the Church, and by innovations in doctrines introduced the aforesaid heresy; and he thought by means of his eloquence to revenge himself on his enemy by proving that George had deposed one who was more deeply acquainted with the sacred Scriptures than himself."

Book VII, chapter xvi. "Nectarius, about this period, abolished the office of the presbyter whose duty it was to preside over the imposition of penance; and this is the first instance of the suppression of this office in the Church."

Book VII, chapter xxv. "After the death of Eugenius the Emperor Theodosius went to Milan and repaired toward the church to pray within its walls. When he drew near the gates of the edifice he was met by Ambrose, the bishop of the city, who took hold of him by his purple robe, and said to him, in the presence of the multitude: 'Stand back! a man defiled by sin, and with hands imbued with blood unjustly shed, is not worthy without repentance to enter within these sacred precincts

or partake of the holy mysteries.' The emperor, struck with admiration at the boldness of the bishop, began to reflect on his own conduct, and, with much contrition, retraced his steps. The occasion of his sin was as follows. When Buthericus was general of the troops in Illyria, a charioteer saw him shamefully exposed in a tavern, and attempted an outrage ; he was apprehended and put in custody. Some time after, some magnificent races were to be held at the hippodrome, and the populace of Thessalonica demanded the release of the prisoner, considering him necessary to the celebration of the contest. As their request was not attended to, they rose up in sedition and finally slew Buthericus. On hearing of this deed the wrath of the emperor was excited immediately, and he commanded that a certain number of the citizens should be put to death. The city was filled with the blood of many unjustly shed ; for strangers, who had but just arrived there on their journey to other lands, were sacrificed with the others. There were many cases of suffering well worthy of commiseration. . . . It appears that it was for these and other acts of cruelty that Ambrose rebuked the emperor, forbade him to enter the Church, and excommunicated him. Theodosius publicly confessed his sin in the Church and during the time set apart for penance refrained from wearing his imperial ornaments, according to the usage of mourners. . . . Ambrose, no doubt, performed many other actions worthy of his priestly office, which are known, as is likely, only to the inhabitants of the country. Among the illustrious deeds that are attributed to him, I have been made acquainted with the following: It was the custom of the emperor to take a seat in assemblies of the Church within the palisades of the altar, so that he sat apart from the rest of the people. Ambrose, considering that the custom had originated either from subserviency or want of discipline, caused the emperor to be seated without the trellis-work of the altar, so that he sat in front of the people, and behind the priests. The Emperor Theodosius approved of this excellent alteration, as did likewise his successors ; and we are told that it has been ever since scrupulously observed. . . . Ambrose was very diligent in the observance of the laws of the Church, and in maintaining discipline among his clergy."

Theodoret

Book V, chapter xvii. [The Emperor Theodosius had quelled a riot at Thessolonica in a needlessly bloodthirsty way. It is said that seven thousand perished.] " News of the lamentable calamity reached Ambrose. The emperor on his arrival at

Milan wished, according to custom, to enter the church. Ambrose met him outside the outer porch and forbade him to step over the sacred threshold. The end of Ambrose's remarks was as follows: 'How will you stretch forth your hands still dripping with the blood of unjust slaughter? How in such hands will you receive the all-holy body of the Lord? How will you who in your rage unrighteously poured forth so much blood lift to your lips the precious blood? Begone! Attempt not to add another crime to that which you have committed. Submit to the restriction to which the God the Lord of all agrees that you be sentenced. He will be your physician, He will give you health. . . . He, therefore, bowed to the rebuke of Ambrose, and retired, sighing and weeping to the palace.' . . . He said to Thupinus: 'I am groaning and lamenting at the thought of my own calamity; for menials and beggars the way to the Church lies open; they can enter without fear, and put up their petitions to their own Lord. I dare not set my foot there, and besides this for me the door of heaven is shut, for I remember the voice of the Lord which plainly says, "Whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."'

"Theodosius went to Ambrose with these words: 'I do not seek wrongfully to cross the sacred threshold; but I ask you to loose my bond, to take into account the mercy of our common Lord, and not to shut against me a door which our Master has opened for all who repent.' The archbishop answered: 'What repentance have you shown since your terrible crime? You have inflicted wounds hard to heal: what salve have you applied? . . . Put forth an edict which shall make the sentence of your passion null and void.' . . . On this the divine Ambrose loosed the bond. Now the emperor came boldly within the holy temple, but did not pray to his Lord standing, or even on his knees, but lying prone on the ground he uttered David's cry: 'My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken me according to thy word.' He plucked out his hair, he smote his head, he besprinkled the ground with drops of tears and prayed for pardon. When the time came for him to bring his oblation to the holy table he stood up and approached the sanctuary, weeping all the time. After making his offering, as he was wont, he remained within at the rail, but once more the great Ambrose kept not silence and taught him the distinction of places. First he asked him if he wanted anything, and when the emperor said that he was waiting for participation in the divine mysteries, Ambrose sent word to him by the chief deacon, and said: 'The inner place, sir, is open only to priests; to all the rest it is inaccessible; go out and stand where others stand; people can make emperors but not priests.'"

Letter CLXX. " Immediately after the deposition excommunication becoming known to them, they performed sacred functions, and they continue to do so, in plain disbelief of Him Who said : ' Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.' "

APPENDIX II

CHURCH COUNCILS

Elvira. Prob. date 305.

TOTAL excommunication was threatened in the following cases :—

(i) Sacrificing in an idol's temple or committing a capital offence (Can. I).

(ii) Flamines who undertook all the duties of the office, including sacrifice (Can. II).

(iii) Murderers who employed magic in order to kill (Can. VI).

(iv) Fornicators who had committed the offence twice, having done penance for the first offence (Can. VII).

(v) Women who without any reason deserted their husbands and had intercourse with other men (Can. VIII).

(vi) Parents who give up their children to prostitution (Can. XII).

(vii) Virgins dedicated to God who have committed a carnal sin without acknowledging it, and continuing obstinate (*non intelligentes quid amiserint*) (Can. XIII).

(viii) Parents who gave their daughters as wives to heathen priests (Can. XVII).

(ix) Clergy who committed adultery (Can. XVIII).

(x) A Christian who had been frequently guilty of adultery : if he is near death and promises amendment, he is to be given communion : but if on recovery he again lapses, he is to be refused communion even on his deathbed (Can. XLVII).

(xi) Those who fix scurrilous libels in churches are anathematized (Can. LII).

(xii) Women who killed their offspring by an adulterer (Can. LXIII).

(xiii) Women who lived in adultery with men, *usque in finem mortis*, were not to receive communion even on their deathbeds (Can. LXIV).

(xiv) Clergy who connived adultery in their wives (Can. LXV).

(xv) Men who married their stepdaughters (Can. LXVI).

(xvi) A man who connived at his wife's adultery (Can. LXIX).

(xvii) Sodomites (Can. LXXI).

(xviii) A widow who had sinned and then married another man (Can. LXXII).

(xix) An informer whose information had caused the prescription or death of another (Can. LXXIII).

(xx) A man detected in bearing false witness against a cleric (Can. LXXV).

Communion was granted at death in the following cases :

(i) Flamines, who had not sacrificed but had only given the games, might be received at the end of their lives to communion, if they had done the appointed promise (Can. III).

(ii) Virgins dedicated to God, and falling from purity, on confessing their sin are to do perpetual penance and be received on their deathbeds to communion.

(iii) If a Christian woman married a man whom she knew had illegally divorced his wife, she might communicate only on her death-bed (Can. X).

(iv) See § ix. (Can. XLVII).

(v) Virgins dedicated to God who had committed a carnal sin, if they acknowledged their sin and did perpetual penance, might receive the communion on their death-beds (Can. XIII).

Penance was fixed for a definite period as follows :—

(i) Flamines, who had sacrificed as catechumens, might be baptized after three years (Can. IV).

(ii) If a mistress killed her servant, so that she died within three days, and meant to kill her, seven years' penance ; if she did not mean to kill her, five years. But if she fell ill during her penance, should be received to communion (Can. V).

(iii) A virgin who had taken no vows and had committed a carnal sin could be reconciled at the end of one year, without penance, if she married her seducer, on the ground that she had merely anticipated the marriage state. But if she married anyone else, she had to do five years' penance (Can. XIV).

(iv) Parents who married their daughters to heretics or Jews—five years (Can. XVI).

(v) Catholics who reverted to heresy and desired to return—ten years (Can. XXII).

(vi) Landlords who receive as rent things sacrificed to idols—five years (Can. XL).

(vii) A Christian who in times of persecution did not frequent Christian worship, but did not openly apostatize—in fact, pretended to be neutral—ten years (Can. XLVI).

(viii) Parents who broke off an engagement—three years ;

unless some serious fault be urged in either of the betrothed, in which case the parents are excused.

(ix) Priests (probably heathen priests) who have only carried garlands, without either sacrificing or contributing out of their own pockets to heathen rites, may be received after two years (Can. LV).

(x) Women who lent garments for heathenish processions—one year (Can. LVII).

(xi) Christians who were present at the pagan worship in the Capitol—ten years (Can. LIX).

(xii) A Christian marrying his deceased wife's sister—five years (Can. LXI).

(xiii) A woman who deserted an adulterer with whom she had been living—ten years (Can. LXIV).

(xiv) A man who was unfaithful to his wife—five years (Can. LXIX).

(xv) If a woman was unfaithful, and the husband left her, after continuing for some period to cohabit with her, knowing her unfaithfulness—ten years (Can. LXX).

(xvi) If a widow had committed adultery with a man and afterwards married him—five years. The husband had to do ten years penance (Can. LXXII).

(xviii) A false witness did penance according to the gravity of the offence. If the crime was not punishable with death, and if the false witness can prove that he kept silence for a long time—two years: otherwise—five years (Can. LXXIV).

(xvii) An informer who gave evidence of a crime not serious enough to merit prescription or death—five years (Can. LXXIII).

(xix) A man who allowed himself to be ordained deacon, and had previously committed a mortal sin: if he confessed his fault himself—three years' penance; if his sin was discovered by another—five years; in either case he remained a layman to the end of his life (Can. LXXVI).

(xx) A man who committed adultery with a Jewess or pagan woman and did not confess the sin himself—five years (Can. XXXVIII).

(xxi) Players at dice—one year's penance (Can. LXXIX).

In addition to these fixed penalties, excommunication for a period was enforced for various offences: e.g. taking usury (Can. XX), neglecting public worship for three Sundays (Can. XXI), youths who committed adultery (Can. XXXI), lighting wax candles during the day in a cemetery (Can. XXXIV), demoniacs who persisted in lighting the church candles (Can. XXXVII), Christians who for fear of their slaves did not dare to expel the slaves' idols from their houses and as a result were

themselves led away (Can. XLI), those who suffered their fruit to be blest by Jews (Can. XLIX), those who ate with Jews (Can. L), those who placed scurrilous libels in churches (Can. LII), duumviri during their year of office (Can. LVI), charioteers and actors who, after baptism, reverted to their old callings (Can. LXII), Christian women who married actors (Can. LXVII).

The various terms used may be tabulated here :—

(1) degradari et abstineri (XX). This refers to clergy only.
(2) ab Ecclesia proieci (XX, LXII), abieci (XLIX).
(3) abstineri (XXI, LVII), a communione abstineri (XXXVII, L).
(4) ad communionem admitti (XXXI).
(5) arceri ab Ecclesiae communione (XXXIV, LXVII).
(6) alieni ab Ecclesia haberi (XLI).
(7) anathematizari (LII).
(8) ab Ecclesia cohiberi (LVI).

Synod of Arles, A.D. 314

This synod, of particular interest to ourselves, as having been attended by three British bishops, contains no hint of definite periods of penance. One canon only inflicted lifelong excommunication :—

" With respect to those who are said to have given up copies of the Holy Scriptures or sacred vessels or the names of their brethren, we have decreed that whosoever has been detected not by mere verbal denunciations but by writings signed by officers of justice (*exactis publicis*), shall be removed from the clerical office. . . . And since there are many who seem to oppose ecclesiastical rules, and imagine that they ought to be admitted to make their accusations with the help of paid witnesses, on no account let them be admitted, unless as aforesaid they can verify their statements by writings signed by officers of justice (Can. XIII). And with respect to those who falsely accuse their brethren, we have decreed that they shall not communicate for the rest of their lives " (*usque ad exitum non communicare*) (Can. XIV).

The other sentences are more vague.

(i) Those who take part in gladiatorial combats (this seems the most reasonable of the four interpretations mentioned by Hefele) are excommunicated (Can. III).
(ii) Jockeys are similarly excommunicated (Can. IV).
(iii) And actors (Can. V).
(iv) Magistrates or governors are no longer excommunicated during the period of their office (cf. Elvira, Can. LVI), " unless

they begin to act contrary to discipline," when they are to be excluded (*a communione excludantur*) (Can. VII).

(v) Girls who marry heathens are to be temporarily suspended ("*aliquanto tempore a communione arceantur*") (Can. XI).

(vi) Clerical usurers are to be suspended, not merely from office, but from Church membership (*a communione abstineri*) (cf. Elvira, Can. XX).

(vii) Apostates who have never attempted to do penance till they fall ill and beg for communion are not to be granted it unless they recover and bring forth fruit meet for repentance (Can. XXII).

Council of Ancyra (314)

This council only excommunicated for life in one instance, viz. that of married men over fifty years of age convicted of immoral practices with beasts, and even then allowed death-bed communion (Can. XVI). In one respect it softened a canon of Elvira (LXIII) which had forbidden even death-bed communion to women who had been unfaithful to their husbands and had destroyed their offspring, by allowing them communion after ten years' penance. The canon adds with regard to the sterner rule, *καὶ τουτῷ συντίθενται*, which probably means, "And some agree with this." Wilful murderers had to be kneelers for life, with death-bed communion (Can. XXII).

For the rest the decrees of the council are as follows :—

(i) Priests who had apostatized during the recent persecutions and had genuinely repented were not even unfrocked, but continued to enjoy the honour of their office, without fulfilling any priestly function (*τούτους ἔδοξε τῆς μὲν τιμῆς τῆς κατὰ τὴν καθέδραν μετέχειν, προσφέρειν δὲ αὐτοὺς ἢ ὁμιλεῖν ἢ ὅλως λειτουργεῖν τινῶν ἱερατικῶν λειτουργιῶν μὴ ἐξεῖναι*) (Can. I).

(ii) Deacons were to be similarly dealt with, the bishops being given power to deal with each case according to discretion (Can. II). Six Canons deal with the apostasy of the laity.

(iii) Persons forced to sacrifice, and doing so cheerfully and willingly, eating of the sacrifice as if it were ordinary food, were given one year's hearing, three years' kneeling, two years' standing, and then admitted to communion (Can. IV).

(iv) Those who appeared at sacrificial feasts under constraint, and in mourning attire, had three years' kneeling and one year's standing : if they were present only but did not eat, two years' kneeling and one year's standing, with power given to bishops to vary this at discretion (Can. V). [The phrase *χωρὶς προσφορᾶς*, used with *δεχθήτωσαν* or *κοινωνησάτωσαν*, must, I think, mean non-

communicating attendance. The προσφορά may mean the actual " offerings," and the penitents not being able to contribute would not be able to share : or it may mean the whole service. This was equivalent to the grade of " standing."]

(v) Those who yielded on a mere threat from the authorities were naturally more hardly dealt with. They had one year's hearing, three years' kneeling, and two years' standing (Can. VI).

(vi) Those who attended the sacrifice but ate their own food had two years' kneeling and were then admitted. It rested with the bishop whether they were to be admitted to the offering, that is, he would give them a period of " standing " if he saw fit (Can. VII).

(vii) Those who under compulsion sacrificed two or three times had four years' kneeling and two years' standing (Can. VIII).

(viii) Those who had not only apostatized but had allied themselves for a period with the Church's enemies had three years' hearing, six years' kneeling, and one year's standing (Can. IX).

(ix) Those who had been guilty of lying with beasts, but before the age of twenty, were given fifteen years' kneeling and five years' standing : those who had sinned excessively in this respect had a longer period of kneeling. If the offenders were over twenty years of age and married, they had twenty-five years' kneeling and five years' standing (Can. XVI). The difference made between grown-ups and adolescents seems unreasonably small.

(x) Those who had committed bestiality and, being lepers themselves (in a spiritual sense), had made others leprous, were to pray among the χειμαζόμενοι, that is, those outside the porch, the weepers. This seems to be the meaning of this difficult canon (XVII).

(xi) Those who had taken vows of virginity and broken them were treated as bigamists (Can. XIX).

(xii) Any person unfaithful to his or her marriage-vow had seven years' penance. The periods to be spent in each grade are not stated (Can. XX).

(xiii) For unpremeditated murder some earlier law, unknown, allowed communion after seven years, and some later but equally unknown law gave only five years' penance (Can. XXIII). The reference may be to Elvira (Can. V).

(xiv) Those who indulged in magic and other pagan customs had three years' kneeling and two years' standing (Can. XXIV).

(xv) Finally, in one particular case a man had engaged himself to a girl, and had connection with her sister, who hanged herself, and he then married his fiancée. He and all his accomplices had

ten years either weeping or kneeling or both, and then were admitted to be " standers," but how long they had to remain in this grade is not stated.

Synod of Neocæsarea (between 314 and 325).

(i) If a priest married he was to be degraded to the status of a layman : if he committed fornication or adultery he was to do penance (Can. I).

(ii) If a woman had married two brothers she was to be excommunicated permanently : but if she fell ill and promised to break off the union she might be admitted to penance. There is no mention of a death-bed communion. Very severe (δυσχερής) penance was meted out to the survivor of such a union (Can. II).

(iii) Those who had often married were sentenced to penances already well known. It is not certain to what laws this canon refers. A second marriage was punished by one year's penance. S. Basil assigned to a trigamist three years' hearing and a period of standing (Can. III).

(iv) A catechumen who before baptism fell into sin had to become a hearer if he was already a kneeler ; if on being reduced to this state he continued to sin he was shut out entirely (Can. V). It is, however, not quite easy to discover the precise meaning of this. It would imply that every catechumen had to advance by stages of probation not unlike those of the penitents.

(v) If the wife of a layman was unfaithful, her husband could not be admitted to the worship of the Church ; if she had proved unfaithful after her husband's ordination, he must leave her ; if he did not do so, he must resign his office (Can. VIII). Hefele seems to think that the idea was that when the wife was dishonoured the husband, as part of her, was dishonoured too. One would like to believe that the early Church realized that " the innocent party " meant " the comparatively innocent party."

Council of Nicæa, 325

The well-known anathema at the end of the creed runs as follows : " But those who say, ' There was when He was not,' and ' Before He was begotten He was not,' and ' He was made of nothing,' or who say that ' He is of another hypostasis or of another substance ' (from the Father), or that the Son of God is ' created,' or ' mutable,' or ' subject to change,' the Catholic Church anathematizes." That anathematization did not necessarily involve excommunication is clear from the fact that the two bishops who refused to sign (Theonas and Secundas) as well as Arius himself, were formally excommunicated (see Soz., i. 9 ; Theod., i. 7, 8).

The first canon requiring attention is Can. V: "As regards the excommunicated, whether clergy or laity, the sentence passed by the bishops of each province shall stand, according to the canon which says, 'Those who have been excommunicated by some shall not be admitted by others.' But care must be taken to see that men have not been excommunicated (ἀποσυνάγωγος) by narrow-mindedness or contentiousness or some such feeling of hatred on the part of the bishop." To avoid this, the bishops were to meet twice a year, in the early spring, and in autumn, to see that the sentence of excommunication was just.

The eighth canon dealt with the Novatians. It was made as easy as possible for them to conform. They had to swear allegiance to the doctrines of the Catholic Church, that is, they must be willing to communicate with those who had contracted second marriages and with those who had lapsed but had done their appointed penance. Their clergy were treated with much consideration, though whether they had to submit to re-ordination or not is not certain.

With respect to the lapsed, the Council decreed as follows :—

(i) With regard to those who lapsed during the tyranny of Licinius, without being driven to it by necessity, or by threat of confiscation of property or by any danger or similar matter, the Council has decreed that although they have proved themselves unworthy of it, they are nevertheless to be treated leniently. Therefore all believers who are genuinely penitent must do a penance of three years' "hearing" and seven years' kneeling; and for two years they shall join with the people in the prayers without sharing in the offering (χωρὶς προσφορᾶς) (Can. XI).

(ii) "But those who were called by grace, and showed zeal at first, and then cast away their belts (that is, deserted from Christ's army) and afterwards have returned to their own vomit like dogs, and have gone so far as to give money and presents to be readmitted to (Christ's) military service, let them do three years' hearing and ten years' kneeling. But in the case of all these penitents their intention and the character of their repentance must be tested. For all who with fear and tears and patient continuance in well-doing attest their conversion by deeds and not by appearance, when they have completed their appointed term of hearing, may reasonably take part in the prayers, and it is in the power of the bishop to treat them with greater leniency. But all who bear it (exclusion) with indifference and consider that the mere outward exclusion from the Church is sufficient for their conversion, shall perform the whole of their appointed penance" (Can. XII).

(iii) With regard to the dying, the old and canonical law shall still be observed, that, if anyone be dying, he shall not be deprived of the last and most necessary *viaticum* (ἐφόδιον) ; but if after having received absolution and again been admitted to communion he be numbered again among the living, let him stand among those who take part in prayer only ; but the bishop shall in every case, after due enquiry, administer the Eucharist to every single person who is on the point of death and requests it. Compare the sixth canon of Ancyra. The earlier part of this canon refers to the *lapsi* only, but the latter part is most emphatic as to the propriety of granting the Eucharist to the dying, whatever the offence may have been (*καθόλου δέ καὶ περὶ παντὸς οὑτινοσοῦν*) ; thus contradicting the sterner Canons of Elvira, Erles, Ancyra, and Neocæsarea (Can. XIII).

(iv) Catechumens who lapsed were naturally treated more tenderly ; they had three years among the *audientes*, or hearers, and afterwards could join in prayer with the catechumens (Can. XIV).

(v) Canons XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII deal with clerical discipline. Canon XVI threatens excommunication to clergy who decline to return to their own dioceses. Canon XVII, degradation to clergy taking interest for their money, and Canon XVIII was directed against encroachment of the diaconate : deacons had been administering the chalice to priests and bishops, and even consecrated the elements.

Synod of the Dedication at Antioch, 341

The twenty-five canons of this Synod contain little that bears upon the discipline of the Church, being mostly concerned with rules for clergymen. All laymen who obstinately refuse the Nicene solution of the Easter question are excommunicated : clergy so offending are to be degraded and excommunicated, and those who continue to hold communion with them are treated similarly (Can. I). Persons forsaking public prayer, particularly the Eucharist, are to be excommunicated till they have done penance. All association with them is forbidden, even private prayer (Can. II). The remaining canons contain rules for clergymen, especially bishops and *choriepiscopi*.

Synod of Sardica. (Date uncertain ; Soc. and Soz., 347.)

(i) The translation of bishops is forbidden. As Hosius pointed out, " It has never been possible to discover a bishop willing to exchange a larger city for a smaller." Offending bishops were denied even lay communion (Can. I). Should he urge in his defence that he was summoned to his new city and see by popular

acclamation, there were always the few who could be bought, would shout in church for some particular bishop : but what is this but detestable chicanery ? Let the offender be denied even lay communion (Greek version) at the hour of death (Latin version) (Can. II).

(ii) The remaining canons are principally concerned with rules and regulations for the clergy. The only canons which need mention are XIII and XIV, which decree that if a cleric, excommunicated by his own bishop, goes to another bishop for communion, that bishop shall not grant him communion : if he does, he must state his reasons to a synod of bishops : but (Can. XIV) if the excommunicating bishop is passionate and deprives an innocent man of communion, the excommunicated man may resort to the metropolitan or other bishop and have his case fairly tried. He is to remain excommunicated *pendente lite*, but the excommunicating bishop is to acquiesce in the result of the trial.

Synod of Laodicea (343–81)

Many of the canons of this council deal with quite small points in the conduct of services, etc., nor is there any mention of stated lengths of penance. This is probably due to the fact that the mind of the Church on larger issues was already made up, and that the amount of penance to be done for more trivial offences was left to the local authorities. The following canons are of interest :—

(i) A second marriage, lawfully contracted, were not utterly condemned. After a short period of prayer and fasting the parties might be readmitted to Communion (Can. I ; cf. Nicæa, Can. VIII ; Neocæsarea, Cans. III and VII ; and Ancyra, Can. XIX).

(ii) " Sinners of various kinds, if they have persevered in the public confession and penance, and have entirely turned from evil, after a period of penance fixed in proportion to their fall, shall, in consideration of the pity and goodness of God, be again received to communion " (Can. II).

This is a statement of the mind of the Church, as distinguished from the stricter and more lax elements in it. Van Espen quoted by Hefele, makes it clear that the confession (ἐξομολόγησις) here is not strictly sacramental confession, but " the oft-repeated contrite confession before God and the congregation in prayer of sins committed, which preceded sacramental confession and absolution."

(iii) " Hearers " were not allowed to be present at Ordinations (Can. V). It is not certain whether this referred to the

election or ordination of the clergy. The underlying principle is not affected.

(iv) Heretics, so long as they continue in heresy, were not allowed to set foot in church (Can. VI).

(v) Canons VII and VIII deal with returning heretics. The Novatian, Photinian, and Quartodeciman heretics were to renounce all heresies, learn the creed, be anointed with the holy chrism, and received to Communion. Their baptism was regarded as valid. The Montanists, "even though of the number of the pretended clergy and held in the greatest esteem," were to be carefully catechized, and then baptized. Their baptism was suspect, owing to the Montanist identification of the Holy Ghost with Montanus.

(vi) Canon IX forbad the faithful to frequent cemeteries or chapels dedicated to heretic martyrs. If they did so, they were to be excommunicated for a time, and then, on doing penance, readmitted (see Euseb., H. E., v. 16).

(vii) Canon X forbad intermarriage with heretics, repeating Elvira, Canon XVI.

(viii) "After the homily of the bishop, first the prayer for the Catechumens shall be said separately, and after the departure of the catechumens the prayer for the penitents, and when those who have received the imposition of hands and have withdrawn, then in like manner shall three prayers for the faithful be said: the first in silence, but the second and third repeated aloud. Hereupon the kiss of peace is given. And after the priests have given the kiss of peace to the bishop, the laity shall give the same to one another, and the Holy Sacrifice shall be offered. And the clerics (ἱερατικοί) alone shall be permitted to approach the altar of sacrifice and to take part in it" (Can. XIX).

(ix) "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honour, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ" (Can. XXIX).

(x) "Christians shall not marry heretics. They shall neither take them nor their children in marriage, nor shall they give their sons or daughters in marriage to them, until they promise to become Christians" (Can. XXXI).

(xi) "No Christians shall forsake the martyrs of Christ, and turn to false martyrs, i.e. those of the heretics, or to the heretics themselves before mentioned, for they are far from God. Whoever, therefore, goes over to them shall be held excommunicate" (Can. XXXIV, cf. Can. IX).

(xii) Can. XXXV forbad angelolatry. "Whoever, there-

fore, shows an inclination to this hidden idolatry, let him be anathema."

(xiii) "Neither the higher nor the lower clergy may be magicians, conjurors, mathematicians, or astrologers, nor shall they make so-called amulets, which are chains for their own souls. And those who wear these amulets shall be shut out from the Church" (Can. XXXVI).

(xiv) Canons XXXVII, XXXVIII, and XXXIX forbad all religious intercourse with Jews and heretics.

Synod at Gangra

This synod, of uncertain date, was held to condemn the followers of one Eustathius. Its canons, twenty in number, all end with "let him be anathema," which Canon I interprets to mean, "that is, without further judgment shut out from the Church." The Eustathians appear to have been ultra-ascetic in relation to married life, and generally to have set themselves against all Catholic customs on the ground that they were pre-eminently the saints. Against such customs the canons of this synod were directed.

The Second General Council. Constantinople, 381

(i) While Canon I anathematized all heretics, "especially the Eunomians or Anomœans, the Arians or Eucloscians, the Semi-Arians or Pneumatomachians, the Sabellians, Marcellians, Photinians, and Apollinarians," Canon VII provided for heretics returning to the Church. Arians, Macedonians, Sabbatians (a Novatian sect holding Quartodeciman views), Novatians, Quartodecimans, and Apollinarians were to be received on recantation of their errors, and after unction were received to Communion. But Eunomians, who baptized with one immersion only, Montanists, Sabellians, and certain others were to be received as heathens, and treated as concrete from heathenism.

(ii) Canon VI, of prodigious length, regulated accusation against bishops. It provided that heretics and excommunicate persons must first clear themselves of their own error, but persons in full communion with the Church could accuse bishops before a provincial council, with proper safeguards, but never before the Emperor.

Synod of Rome, 386.

Canon VIII laid down that those who returned from Novatianism or Montanism should be received back by imposition of hands only, because they re-baptize. Hefele's explanation of

this, referring it to Nicæa, Canon VIII, is not very lucid or convincing. He takes it to refer to clergy only, interpreting it by the Nicene canon. May it not mean that so long as Novatians and Montanists re-baptized those who had seceded, and therefore implicated the seceders in a tacit admission that they had not received Christian baptism at all, the Church must treat them accordingly, and deal with them as penitents? Having been baptized once already by the Church they could not be baptized again, but they were regarded as penitents on whom hands were laid before their restoration to Communion.

Second Synod of Carthage, circa 390.

Canons III and IV provided that only a bishop could reconcile a penitent, but in his unavoidable absence he might empower a priest to do so.

Canon VII provided anyone receiving into the Church one excommunicated elsewhere shall himself be excommunicated.

Canons VI and VIII provided that no one of evil repute should be allowed to accuse bishops or priests, but that an excommunicated priest had the right of appeal to the neighbouring bishop. Should he not appeal, but remain contumacious and cause a schism, he shall "lose his post and incur anathema."

Synod at Hippo, 393.

(i) In the case of a bishop being accused: he must be accused before the primate of his province, and may not be suspended without further proceedings, unless when summoned he declines to appear within a month. If he declines to appear before the General Council of the African Church, he is excommunicate. The same rules applied to the accuser (Cans. VI and VII).

(ii) If a priest were accused the bishop and five neighbouring colleagues were to try him: if a deacon, two colleagues sufficed: accusations against others the bishop heard alone (Can. VIII).

(iii) "The time of penance shall be apportioned by the bishop in proportion to the greatness of the sin. Priests may not absolve any penitents, without the consent of the bishop, unless the bishop is absent and it is a case of necessity. If an offence is publicly known, the penitent shall receive the imposition of hands before the apsis (therefore in public)" (Can. XXV).

APPENDIX III

THE APOSTOLICAL CONSTITUTIONS

THE second book, dealing with the function of ministers, contains some reference to the administration of ecclesiastical discipline.

§ 7. " Beloved, know ye that they who are baptized into the death of our Lord Jesus are obliged to continue no longer in sin. For as those who are dead can no longer do wrong, so those who are dead with Christ can do wrong no longer. Thus we do not believe, brethren, that any person who has received the laver of life continues in the practice of the wicked deeds of sinners. And he who sins after his baptism, unless he repent and forsake his sin, shall be condemned to hell-fire."

§ 8. After a reference to persecution by heathen and false slander, " But if a man be convicted of some wicked deed, that man not only hurts himself but causes the whole body of the Church and its teaching to be blasphemed. . . . Therefore the bishop must boldly reject such persons on full conviction, unless they change their course of life."

§ 9. The bishop is warned against favouring the wealthy or influential sinner. " If he has not a good conscience and is a respector of persons for the sake of filthy lucre and receiving of bribes, and spares the open offender and allows him to continue in the Church, he despises the voice of God and our Lord which says, ' Thou shalt execute righteous judgment ' " (Deut. i. 17). Proverbs xxii. 10 is also cited.

§ 10. The different effects resulting from discipline ill or well administered are contrasted. The slothful bishop, who like Saul and Eli spares where he should have been stern (1 Kings xv. ; 1 Kings ii.) gives scandal to the newly baptized and the catechumens and the young people. " For seeing what kind of a person their ruler is they will grow sceptical owing to his wickedness and neglect to do justice, and indulging in the same malady will persist with him." " But when the offender scans the whole Church one by one, and can find no blemish in the bishop or the flock under his care, he will be put to confusion and pricked

at the heart, and will go away peaceably with shame and tears, and the flock will remain pure. He will give himself to God with tears, and repenting of his sins will hope. Further, the whole flock, seeing his tears, will be instructed, since by penance a sinner avoids destruction."

§ 11. "Therefore for this reason, O bishop, seek to be pure in thy deeds, and adorn thy office with dignity, for it is the office of one who exhibits the character of God among men . . . and so sit in the Church when thou speakest as one having authority to judge offenders. For to you, O bishops, is it said, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'"

§ 12. "Do thou therefore, O bishop, just with authority like God, yet accept the penitent; for God is a God of mercy. Rebuke sinners, admonish the unconverted, exhort those that stand firm to persevere in their goodness, accept the penitent, for the Lord God has promised with an oath to forgive the penitent for what they have done wrong."

§ 13. "The innocent are to continue to be so, and not to make trial of what sin is, that they may not have occasion of trouble, anguish, and those lamentations which must precede forgiveness. . . . In the first place, then, condemn the guilty person with authority; then afterwards seek to restore him with mercy and compassion and willingness to receive him, promising him salvation if he will change his manner of life and become a penitent; and when he does repent and submits to his punishment, receive him, remembering that our Lord has said, 'There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.'"

§ 14. "But if thou refuse to accept him who repents thou dost expose him to such as lie in wait to destroy. . . . Receive, therefore, nothing doubting, him that repents. Be not hindered by such merciless men who say that we must not be contaminated with such persons, nor even speak with them. Such counsel is from men who know not God and His providence: they are unreasonable judges, merciless beasts." The rest of the section develops the argument that it is not discourse with evildoers, but actions with them, that we are to avoid. "In this present world the good and the evil are mingled together in the common affairs of life, but not in holy communion; and in this the friends and beloved of God are guilty of no sin."

§ 15. "Take note, ye who are our beloved sons, how merciful yet righteous the Lord our God is; how gracious and loving unto men; and yet assuredly He will not pardon the guilty,

though He welcomes the returning sinner, and restores him, giving no occasion for the suspicions of such as would judge sternly and reject offenders entirely, and refuse to grant them exhortation which might lead them to repentance. . . . Therefore you should encourage those who have sinned and lead them to repentance, and give them hope, and not fondly imagine that you will be partakers of their offences by the love you bear to them. Receive the penitent with eagerness, and rejoice over them, and with mercy and compassion judge the sinners. For if a person were walking by the river side and about to stumble, and thou wert to push and force him into the river instead of giving him thy hand to help him, thou wouldest be guilty of the murder of thy brother ; whereas thou shouldest rather give a helping hand as he was about to fall, lest he perish irretrievably, that the people may take warning and the offender may not utterly perish. It is thy duty, O bishop, neither to overlook the sins of the people nor to reject the penitent."

§ 16. The process of segregation is described. " When thou dost see the offender, sternly bid him be cast forth ; and as he goes out let the deacons deal sternly with him, and then let them go and seek him out, and prevent his re-entering the Church ; and when they return, let them entreat thee on his behalf. For our Saviour Himself entreated His Father for those who had sinned, as it is written in the Gospel: ' Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Then bid the offender come in ; and if on examination thou find him penitent and fit to be received unto the Church when thou hast punished him with his days of fasting according to the degree of his rank—such as two, three, five, or seven weeks—then set him free, and speak such things to him as are fitting by way of reproof, instruction and exhortation to a sinful man for his amendment."

§ 17. The danger of a sinful bishop is emphasized. If he does not administer discipline the canker will spread. " If we neglect to separate the transgressor from the Church of God, we shall make the Lord's house a den of thieves. For the bishop must not be silent in the case of offenders, but must rebuke and exhort them and discipline them and afflict them with fastings, so that he may put a holy fear into the others."

§ 18. " Let the bishop therefore be anxious for all sorts of people : for those who have not offended, that they may continue innocent ; for those who offend, that they may repent. . . . It is your duty also to give absolution to the penitent. For whenever one who has sinned says in the sincerity of his heart, ' I have sinned against the Lord,' the Holy Spirit answers, ' The Lord also hath put away thy sin.' Be therefore aware,

O bishop, of the dignity of thine office, that as thou hast received the power of binding so hast thou also that of loosing. Having therefore the power of loosing, know thyself, and behave in this world as becomes thine office, knowing that thou hast a great account to render. . . . Since, therefore, thou hast to give account for all, take care of all. Preserve those that are whole, rebuke those that sin ; and when thou hast afflicted them with fasting, give them relief by absolution. And when the offender with tears begs for restoration, receive him, and let the whole Church pray for him ; and when by imposition of thy hand thou hast admitted him, suffer him to abide afterwards in the flock.

§ 20. Let the laymen honour the bishop as a good shepherd, love him, reverence him as his lord, his master, as the high priest of God, as the teacher of godliness. For he that heareth him heareth Christ, and he that rejecteth him rejecteth Christ. . . . Restore that which is expelled, that is, do not allow that which is in its sins and is cast out by way of punishment, to remain excluded ; but receive it, bring it back, restore it to the flock, that is, to the people of the undefiled Church. Seek for that which is lost, that is, do not suffer that which despairs of its salvation owing to the multitude of offences to perish utterly. . . . We must know that God is very merciful to those who have offended. . . . In like manner, O bishop, be obedient, and do thou seek that which was lost, and guide that which has wandered from the right way, and restore that which has erred : for thou hast authority to bring them back, and to deliver by absolution the broken-hearted. For by thee does our Saviour say to him who is despondent under the sense of his sins, " Thy sins are forgiven thee : thy faith hath saved thee : go in peace." But this place and harbour of tranquillity is the Church of Christ, into which do thou restore them when thou hast loosed them from their sins, as being now sound and unblameable, of good hope, earnest and laborious in good works. As a skilful and pitiful physician heal all who have erred in the ways of sin : for " they that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." Since thou then art a physician of the Lord's Church, provide remedies suitable to every man's condition.

§ 21. The bishop is urged not to be over-severe. " Be not severe, arrogant, unmerciful . . . not one that hides the divine laws and the promise made to repentance, not hasty in thrusting out and expelling. . . . Do not admit less evidence to convict a man than three witnesses, and those of known and admitted reputation. . . . He who is unjustly separated by thy carelessness in judging will be overwhelmed with sorrow and unconsol-

able, and so will either revert to the heathen or be ensnared in heresies, and so will be wholly estranged from the Church and from hope in God, and will be entangled in wickedness, whereby thou wilt be guilty of his destruction. For it is not right to be too hasty in expelling a sinner, and slow to receive him when he would return ; to be eager to cut him off and merciful when he is full of grief and should be healed."

§ 23. " There is no sin more heinous than idolatry, for it is wickedness against God : and yet even this sin has been forgiven upon genuine repentance. But if any one sin in deliberate opposition, and so as to try whether God will punish the wicked or not, such a man shall have no absolution."

§ 24. " Let the bishop heal and receive those who forsake their sins. But if he is unmerciful and refuses to receive the penitent sinner, he will sin against the Lord his God, pretending to be more just than God's justice, and not receiving them whom He has received, through Christ."

§ 37. Careful scrutiny is to be made of one who accuses a brother of sin. " Do thou therefore diligently consider the accuser, wisely observing his manner of life, what and of what kind it is ; and if thou findest him to be a man of truth, act according to the teaching of our Lord (Matt. xviii. 15) ; take him who is accused, rebuke him, that he may repent, in the presence of no third person. But if he be not persuaded, take with thee one or two more, and so show him his error, and rebuke him with mildness and instruction."

§ 38. If then he be persuaded by the mouth of you three it is well. But if a man hardens himself " tell it to the Church ; but if he refuse to hear the Church also, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican " ; and receive him no longer into the Church as a Christian, but reject him as a heathen. For the Church does not receive to communion a heathen or a publican, before they repent every one of their former transgressions ; for our Lord Jesus, the Christ of God, has appointed a place for the acceptance of men upon their repentance.

§ 39. " So also we allow such as these (heathens and publicans) to enter only to hear, until they show the fruit of repentance, that by hearing the word they may not utterly and irrevocably perish. But let them not be admitted to join in prayer ; and let them depart after the reading of the law and the prophets and the gospel, that by such departure they may reform their course of life, and by endeavouring to meet daily at the public assemblies and to be frequent in prayer, they may also at length be readmitted ; and that those who see them may be impressed

and be made all the more secure by fearing to fall into the same condition."

§ 40. The bishop is not to refuse to have anything to do with a man who has "fallen into one or two sins," nor is he to be excluded from hearing the word of the Lord, or from ordinary daily intercourse. Christ ate and drank with publicans and sinners. "Do you therefore live and dwell with those who are separated from you owing to their sins."

§ 41. If a man repents he is to be treated as the prodigal son. "As thou receivest a heathen after thou hast instructed and baptized him, so too do thou let all join in prayer for this man, and by imposition of hands restore him to his old place in the flock, as one purified by repentance; and that imposition of hands shall be to him instead of baptism: for by the imposition of hands the Holy Ghost was given to believers." The bishop is to be the physician, with his various remedies. "But if thou seest that from the feet to the head there is no room for a fomentation or oil or bandage, but that the disease is spreading and resists all cure, as a gangrene that corrupts the whole limb; then with much forethought, and the advice of other skilful physicians, cut off the putrified limb that the whole body of the Church be not corrupted. But be not hasty to cut off, nor have early recourse to the saw with its many teeth. . . . But if thou seest any one past repentance, and he is become insensible, then cut off the incurable from the Church with sorrow and lamentation."

§§ 42, 43. An unjust accuser is to be severely dealt with. "Thou shalt therefore cast him out of the congregation as a murderer of his own brother. If, some time afterwards, he says that he repents, mortify him with fastings, and afterwards ye shall lay your hands upon him and restore him, but still taking care that he does not a second time disturb any man. But if when readmitted he is again troublesome, and will not cease to harass and quarrel with his brother, spying out faults in a contentious spirit, cast him forth as a hurtful person, lest he lay waste the Church of God. . . . Such a man then, when he is a second time cast out of the Church, is justly cut off entirely from the congregation of the Lord."

§§ 44–50 may be briefly summarized, not as being exactly concerned with the *Penitential* Discipline of the Church, but as having some affinity to it. The precepts of 1 Corinthians vi. 1–12 were to be literally carried out. Smaller disputes were for the deacons to judge: graver matters came before the bishop. The Church was to be for the time a law court, with the bishop as

judge, the presbyters and deacons as jurymen (§ 47). Sentences were to vary according to the nature of the offences (§ 48). The most impartial justice is to be done : so urgently is this obvious requirement pressed that one might infer that in some cases favouritism had been shown (§§ 49–53). The condemned man must do penance (§ 46). " Let him, therefore, who is condemned be rebuked, let him be separated, let him undergo the punishment for the hatred he bore to his brother. Afterwards, when he repents, let him be received ; and so when they have learned prudence they will not trouble your tribunals so much."

In Book VIII occur certain prayers and directions for public worship.

§ 5 contains the prayer for the consecration of a bishop, containing the words, " Grant, O Almighty Lord, through thy Christ, the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, that he may have power to remit sins according to thy word." After the reading of the Law and the prophets, and Epistles, Acts, and Gospels, came the " word of exhortation " (preached in this case by the newly consecrated bishop). Then the deacon proclaimed, " Let none of the hearers, none of the unbelievers stay." Then followed (§ 6) the prayer for the catechumens, at the end of which the deacon said, " Depart, catechumens, in peace." The energumens and candidates for confirmation were similarly dealt with (§§ 6, 7, 8). Then followed the bidding to prayer for the penitent (§ 8) and the prayer itself (§ 9) as follows :—

" And let the deacon say, ' Go out, ye that are preparing for illumination.' And after that let him proclaim, ' Ye penitents, pray ; let us all earnestly pray for our brethren in the state of penitence, that God, the lover of compassion, will show them the way of repentance, and accept their return and their confession, and bruise Satan under their feet suddenly, and redeem them from the snare of the devil and the ill-usage of the demons, and free them from every unlawful word, and every absurd practice, and wicked thought ; forgive them all their offences, both voluntary and involuntary, and blot out that handwriting which is against them, and write them in the book of life ; cleanse them from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and restore and unite them to thy holy flock. For He knoweth our frame. For who can glory that he has a clean heart ? And who can boldly say that he is free from sin ? For we are all among the blameworthy. Let us still pray for them more earnestly, for there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, that, being converted from every evil work, they may be joined to all good practice ; that God, the lover of mankind, will suddenly accept their petitions, will restore to them the joy of His

salvation, and strengthen them with His free Spirit ; that they may not be any more shaken, but be admitted to the communion of His most holy things, and become partakers of His divine mysteries, that appearing worthy of His adoption, they may obtain eternal life. Let us all still earnestly say on their account, " Lord, have mercy upon them. Save them, O God, and raise them up by Thy mercy." Rise up and bow your heads to God through His Christ, and receive the blessings.' "

" Let the bishop then add this prayer : ' Almighty, eternal God, Lord of the whole world, the Creator and Governor of all things, who hast exhibited man as the ornament of the world through Christ, and didst give him a law both naturally implanted and written, that he might live according to law, as a rational creature ; and when he had sinned, Thou gavest him Thy goodness as a pledge in order to his repentance : Look down upon these persons who have bended the neck of their body and soul to Thee ; for thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but his repentance, that he may turn from his wicked way and live. Those who didst accept the repentance of the Ninevites, who willest that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth ; who didst accept that son who had consumed his substance in riotous living, with the bowels of a father, on account of his repentance ; do Thou now accept the repentance of Thy suppliants : for there is no man who will not sin ; for " if thou, Lord, markest iniquities, who shall stand ? For with Thee there is propitiation." And do Thou restore them to Thy holy Church, into their former dignity and honour, through Christ our God and Saviour by Whom glory and adoration be to Thee, in the Holy Ghost, for ever. Amen.' Then let the deacon say, ' Depart, ye penitents ' ; and let him add, ' Let none of those who ought not to come draw near. All we of the faithful, let us bend our knee ; let us all entreat God through His Christ ; let us earnestly beseech God through His Christ ' " (Apostol. Const., viii. 8 and 9).

APPENDIX IV

GREGORY OF NYSSA (335–95)

Canonical Letter to Letoius, Bishop of Melitene

GREGORY begins by asserting that the end and object of Church discipline is the cure of the penitent's soul. But as diseases vary, so do medicines (§ i.). He divides sins into two classes, "concupiscible" (ἐπιθυμητικόν) and "irascible" (θυμοειδές). The former include love of money, glory, and pleasure, the latter envy, hatred, wrath, railing, factions, quarrelsome and revengeful dispositions (§ ii.). The Fathers have always deemed the latter more serious than the former. Denial of Christ, lapse into Judaism, idolatry, or Manicheeism means lifelong penance. Such a man must never pray with the people, but separately and apart: he must not partake of the Holy Communion, save on his death-bed. Should he recover, he must still remain excommunicate. But should a man have yielded under pressure of tortures and severe punishments, he is to be punished for a stated time only, the kindly Fathers considering that it was the weak body rather than the soul which had lapsed (§ iii. Cans. 1 and 2).

Those who consulted soothsayers and the like were questioned whether they had deliberately rejected the faith or had merely yielded to their impulses through some urgent necessity: they were dealt with according to the principles of Canons 1 and 2 (§ iv. Can. 3).

Sins of lust were two kinds, adultery (μοιχεία) and fornication (πορνεία). But some reckoned fornication as adultery, since there was but one lawful intercourse of man with woman and woman with man. Everything else was unlawful, since man had but one helper, and woman but one head, given them by God. So if a man "kept his own vessel" he was obeying a law of nature: if not, his sin was unnatural. The stricter party, therefore, made little distinction between adultery and fornication; but the Fathers, being more lenient, made this broad distinction, that fornication was self-indulgence that injured no one else: adultery, that injured another, in which latter

class were sins with animals and children. The Fathers, therefore, gave a double penance where another had been wronged. Further, if a man accused himself of sin they were more lenient than if he had been found out by others. The rule therefore was, for fornication, three years' expulsion from all public prayer whatsoever; three years' hearing, and three years' kneeling, and then communion. It was always allowable to curtail the period of hearing at discretion, the broad principle being that pearls should not be cast before swine, but that when a swine had ceased to be a swine, it was wrong to withhold the pearls. With respect to adultery, the same rules held good, including the discretion to curtail or prolong the period of hearing, save that everything was double (§ v. Can. 4).

With respect to murder, they distinguished between voluntary and involuntary homicide. The former was when a man deliberately plotted to murder his enemy, or killed him in a duel; the latter when, being charitably disposed to another, he killed him by accident. For the former a man had nine years' exclusion, nine years' standing, and nine years' kneeling; but the authorities had power to curtail any or all of these periods to eight, seven, six, or five years. Involuntary murder might be pardoned outright, but this seldom happened. Even if the murder was involuntary, the man was considered unclean, and punished like an ordinary adulterer, though here too the penance could be curtailed: and on his death-bed any man might receive communion, but if he recovered he was to go back to that grade of penance where he was when he fell ill (§ vi. Can. 5).

Covetousness, rather to Gregory's surprise, was not punished by the Fathers, yet it was "idolatry," and "a root of all kinds of evil." It does not seem to have occurred to Gregory that it was very difficult of detection and definition. Nor did the Fathers punish the taking of interest and usury, though these were forbidden in Scripture.

Theft, however, was punished. It was divided into burglary and robbery. The root idea was the same, to annex the property of others, but the Fathers distinguished between them. The burglar was a species of murderer, who attacked the coveted property with weapons, and was punished like a murderer. The robber who stole by some cunning and underhand method (ὁ δὲ ὑφαιρεσέως λανθανούσης σφετεριζόμενος τὸ ἀλλότριον), and then made voluntary confession to the priest, cured his disease by reversing his misdeeds, and giving to the poor, while if he had no property save his body, he must prove his contrition by bodily labour, according to the apostolic command (Eph. iv. 28). We may feel more sympathetic to the burglar than to the company promoter or ingenious swindler, and it rather looks

as if Gregory felt the same. It must be remembered, however, that in a community less highly civilized than our own, ingenious swindlers would be the exception and violent burglaries the rule ; the distinction is probably between the burglar and the pickpocket, though it does seem reasonable that the genuinely penitent in either case should, on proving his repentance by restitution, be readmitted to communion (§ vi. Can. 5).

Robbery of tombs was divided into the pardonable and the unpardonable ; the former consisted of merely stealing for building purposes the stones of which the tomb was constructed, a practice not praiseworthy but at any rate helpful to the State : the latter involved the desecration of human remains to obtain gold or jewellery, and was treated as fornication and punished accordingly. The modern Church might find it hard to forgive a thief who stripped the rings from dead corpses, while to a builder who used certain tombstones of ancient or even modern date for foundations we might be extremely tolerant ! (§ vii. Can. 6).

Sacrilege under the Jewish law was treated like murder, and punished with stoning ; but since then ecclesiastical use has become more tolerant of sacrilege, so that it is punished less severely than adultery. Gregory seems to regret this, but surely it is a very obvious and desirable development. He concludes by saying that in this as in all cases the disposition of the penitent is to be the first consideration, not the time of the penance. As he very shrewdly remarks : *τίς γὰρ ἂν ἐκ τοῦ χρόνου ἴασις γένοιτο* ;

APPENDIX V

TIMOTHY OF ALEXANDRIA (ob. 385)

Q. v. If a husband and wife have had intercourse one with another, should they the same day or the next day partake of the Sacrament ?

A. No, quoting 1 Corinthians vii. 5.

Q. viii. If a woman has just borne a child, ought she to fast and drink no wine in Lent, or is she absolved on the ground of her having borne a child ?

A. Fasting was instituted for the humiliation of the body. But as her body is humbled and weak, she ought to eat and drink what she wishes.

Q. ix. Should a clergyman pray in the presence of Arians or other heretics, or is there no harm in his praying or offering the oblation in their presence ?

A. At the time of the holy offering the deacon cries, before the kiss of peace, Let the excommunicate depart. They ought not therefore to be present, unless they promise to repent to abjure their heresy.

Q. xiii. On how many days of the week should husband and wife abstain ?

A. See answer to Q. v. (1 Corinthians vii. 5). Certainly they should abstain on the Sabbath and on Sunday, because on those days a spiritual sacrifice is offered to God.

Q. xiv. If anyone not in his right mind has laid violent hands on himself or hung himself, should there be an oblation (i.e. communion) or not ?

A. The clergyman must carefully discover whether the man was really out of his mind when he killed himself. For often such a man's relations, desiring to have the oblation and prayer on his behalf, lie, and say that he was not in his right mind : sometimes that he did it on account of his fellow-men's unkindness, or by accident. For such a man the oblation must not be offered, for it is suicide. So a clergyman should make careful enquiries, lest he fall into condemnation.

Q. xv. If a man's wife is mad and has to be kept in iron chains, and her husband says that he cannot remain continent and wishes to take another woman, ought he to take her or not ?

A. In this matter he would be committing adultery, and I can give no other answer.

Q. xvi. If a man is fasting with a view to communion and while washing his face or taking a bath unwillingly drinks a little water, should be communicate ?

A. [Yes], for when Satan has discovered an excuse for preventing him from communicating, he (the man) will do it more frequently,

Ἐπεὶ εὗρεν ὁ Σατανᾶς ἀφορμὴν τοῦ κωλύειν αὐτὸν τῆς κοινωνίας, συχνότερον τοῦτο ποιήσει.

iv. Actors and apostates were not to be refused reconciliation if they desired to return to the Church (Can. XXXIII).

v. With regard to the Donatists, no Donatist cleric was to be received other than as a layman, unless he had never re-baptized, or unless he wished to come over with his whole congregation.

On this point the " transmarine Church," i.e. Rome, is to be consulted, and also as to whether the children of Donatists who had received Donatist baptism at the desire of their parents should be " excluded from being accepted from the service of the altar." The meaning of the latter part of the Canon (XXXVII) is not very plain. Were the children ever baptized in the Catholic Church ? It seems that they must have been, and went over to Donatism with their parents, and were re-baptized. Plainly if some element of compulsion was used by the parents, and the baptism was " not of their own free-will," their position was different from that of their parents.

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